



Timothy W. Brennan, Executive Director

**To:**

- Chief Elected Officials of PVPC Member Communities
- Planning Board Chairs of PVPC Member Communities
- Administrative and Planning Staff of PVPC Member Communities (via email)

**From:** Tim Brennan, Executive Director

**Date:** October 22, 2014

**Reference:** District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Program Projects Solicitation for 2015

**I. Background and Summary:**

The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) is currently soliciting written requests from its 43 member communities that may wish to apply for no cost technical assistance for eligible planning and/or regional shared-service projects that are consistent with the most recent guidelines of the Commonwealth's FY2015 District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Program (please see Attachment A). State funding support for the DLTA Program in 2015 is being made available by the State Legislature and the Administration with a required cash match to be provided by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. Accordingly, I now invite your community to submit a written request for this no cost technical assistance in one or both of the following assistance categories:

- 1) Planning Ahead for Growth or Housing
- 2) Supporting Regional Services

**II. Initial Deadline for Submitting DLTA Assistance Requests:**

The initial deadline to receive DLTA Assistance Requests is Monday, December 1, 2014 (one or more additional solicitations may be undertaken if DLTA funds remain uncommitted after this first round)

**III. Municipal Requirements:**

- Submission of a written request(s) for 2015 DLTA assistance which is signed by your community's chief elected official and/or planning board chair.
- Provision of a low, 5% in-kind match by the community to be applied to the specific DLTA project budget.
- Outline or summary of the expected DLTA project outcomes, products, and deliverables inclusive of a local commitment to pursue project implementation.
- Local commitment to work with the PVPC staff to complete all DLTA-funded work projects and activities on or before December 31, 2015.
- In the event your DLTA assistance request is approved, the community will enter into a needed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the PVPC to document and formalize all needed project agreements needed including a project-specific scope of work and budget.

- Identification of the expected DLTA products (e.g. zoning ordinance or bylaw, regional service agreement, housing needs assessment, formation of mixed use districts, streamlined permitting process, etc.) coupled with a commitment to pursue implementation of identified product(s) and/or project outcome(s).

**IV. Application Procedure:**

Prepare the community's written request(s) for 2015 DLTA assistance and submit with required signatures to the PVPC by Monday, December 1, 2014 to:

Timothy W. Brennan, Executive Director  
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)  
60 Congress Street- Floor 1, Springfield MA 01104

**V. Need Additional Information:**

If you have questions or need additional information about the 2014 DLTA Program, please contact one of the following PVPC staff members:

Chris Curtis [chcurtis@pvpc.org](mailto:chcurtis@pvpc.org) for Planning Ahead for Growth and Housing projects

Joshua Garcia [jgarcia@pvpc.org](mailto:jgarcia@pvpc.org) for Regional Shared-Services projects

Tim Brennan [tbrennan@pvpc.org](mailto:tbrennan@pvpc.org) for general DLTA program information

or, you can contact Chris, Joshua or me at the PVPC by telephone at: 413-781-6045.

**VI. Examples of DLTA Projects:**

Please see the Attachment A which provides examples of eligible 2015 DLTA projects compiled by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). In addition I have enclosed a second Attachment B identifying DLTA-funded projects that the PVPC has undertaken over the past five years.

We look forward to receiving and considering your city or town's request(s) for DLTA assistance in 2015 and to the possibility of working with you and your municipal colleagues in the new calendar year. Once again, I'd urge your community to respond to this request on or before Monday, December 1st. Thank you.



Timothy W. Brennan, Executive Director

TWB/mm  
Attachments - 2

cc: PVPC Commissioners and Alternates  
M. Contreas, DHCD  
C. Curtis, PVPC  
J. Garcia, PVPC  
J. Mazik, PVPC

## ATTACHMENT A

### Examples of Eligible DLTA Project Activities in 2015

**Planning Ahead for Housing:** Planning and implementation activities that encourage and support affordable and market-rate housing production opportunities, specifically related to the Statewide Housing Production Goal of 10,000 multi-family units each year, which may include, but are not limited to:

- The development of market, mixed-income and affordable multi-family housing in transit-oriented-development locations, employment centers, downtown locations and state endorsed priority areas within the regional planning agency's jurisdiction, including gateway cities;
  - The creation of as-of-right zoning districts such as those eligible under the Commonwealth's new Compact Neighborhoods Policy or the Chapter 40R/Smart Growth statute;
  - The creation of prompt and predictable permitting through an Expedited Permitting Priority Development Site using Chapter 43D for residential projects;
  - Identifying challenges and solutions with respect to infrastructure requirements that impact the ability to construct multi-family residential projects in as-of-right zoning districts and/or parcels;
  - Identifying multi-family residential projects subject to the Permit Extension Act (as amended), such as assessing impediments and recommending steps that the state and/or the applicable municipality could realistically take to enable those projects to go forward;
  - Regional analysis of affordable and market-rate housing needs, that can serve as the foundation for the execution of a compact among communities for locating affordable and market-rate housing sites.
- **Planning Ahead for Growth:** Planning and implementation activities that encourage and support economic development opportunities which may include, but are not limited to:
    - Identification, assessment and mapping of Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and Priority Preservation Areas (PPAs) at the local and regional levels, including discussion of specific areas of multifamily housing growth.
    - Supporting prompt and predictable permitting through the Commonwealth's Chapter 43D Expedited Permitting Program for economic development and residential projects;
    - Encouraging communities to investigate the acquisition and use the Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT) to assess economic development opportunities within communities and/or regions and to develop implementation strategies based on EDSAT recommendations;
    - Identifying challenges and solutions with respect to infrastructure requirements that impact the ability to advance economic development and multi-family housing growth opportunities.
    - Identifying economic development projects subject to the Permit Extension Act (as amended), and assess impediments and propose steps that the state and/or the applicable municipality could realistically take to enable those projects to go forward
- **Supporting Regional Services**
    - Shared services (e.g., regional lockup, regional 911 centers, other public safety and emergency response responsibilities, information technology/data management, school district/regional school district analysis, shared professional and administrative services, agreements to operate shared waste disposal/recycling facilities/programs, etc.)
    - Collective purchasing (if such purchasing cannot be otherwise accomplished using statewide contracts or can be achieved regionally for less than the state contract price, or items proposed for purchase are specific to municipal and/or school district agreements); and
    - Cost saving measures that benefit more than one municipality.

**ATTACHMENT B**  
**EXAMPLES OF DELTA FUNDED PROJECTS (FY08-FY14)**

***SUSTAINABLE PLANNING***

- Developing Zoning Bylaws /Ordinances such as Site Plan Review, Table of Uses, Special Permits, Mixed Use Village Centers, Solar and Wind Energy zoning, Storm Water Management, Design Guidelines, Transfer of Development Rights, Mill Re-use Zoning, Chapter 40R Smart Growth Districts, Form-based Codes, Inclusionary Housing, Floodplain and River Protection, and Green Development Performance Standards
- Low Impact Development Standards and Stormwater Zoning
- Master Planning & Updates
- Town Center Revitalization Studies
- Green Communities Designations
- Permitting Guides and Flow Charts
- Comprehensive reviews of zoning to ensure compliance with state law and sound planning practices
- Developing/updating Subdivision Regulations
- Developing/updating Open Space Recreation Plans
- Visioning & Corridor Studies

***MUNICIPAL PARTNERSHIPS***

- Shared Conservation Agent
- Multi-Town Regional School District Budget Planning
- Streamlining and Regionalizing Local Permitting
- Shared Emergency Dispatch Services
- Regional Dam Services
- Strategic Solid Waste Assessment and Organic Waste Management
- Regional Highway Department and Stormwater Services
- Expansion of Regional School Districts
- Regional Purchasing Consortium for Highway Dep. Services & Materials
- Regional Health Services
- Regionalization of Stormwater Services
- Regionalization of Energy Efficiency Services
- Regional Energy Auditing and Building Efficiency Services
- Regional Board of Health Services
- Bike Sharing Programs
- Intermunicipal Water Supply Agreements
- Regional GIS Services

***COMMUNITIES ASSISTED***

Agawam  
Amherst  
Belchertown  
Brimfield  
Chester  
Chesterfield  
Chicopee  
Cummington  
East Longmeadow  
Easthampton  
Goshen  
Granby  
Granville  
Hadley

Hatfield  
Holland  
Holyoke  
Huntington  
Longmeadow  
Ludlow  
Middlefield  
Monson  
Montgomery  
Northampton  
Palmer  
Pelham  
Plainfield  
Russell

South Hadley  
Southampton  
Southwick  
Springfield  
Tolland  
Ware  
West Springfield  
Westhampton  
Westfield  
Wilbraham  
Williamsburg  
Worthington

## ***POTENTIAL MUNICIPAL PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS:***

**There are a range of shared municipal support service opportunities including:**

- shared inspectional services,
- shared grant writing,
- shared information technology services,
- regional municipal accountant services,
- bulk purchasing and procurement services,
- shared public health services,
- shared police personnel, and
- shared Conservation Agent services.

**Projects of note include studies of:**

- school regionalization,
- shared emergency dispatch operations,
- regional sealers of weights and measures services,
- shared local public health services,
- working with towns in a regional school district desiring opportunities for working more collaboratively on school budget and related matter.

**ATTACHMENT B  
EXAMPLES OF DLTA FUNDED PROJECTS (FY08-FY14)**

***SUSTAINABLE PLANNING***

- Developing Zoning Bylaws /Ordinances such as Site Plan Review, Table of Uses, Special Permits, Mixed Use Village Centers, Solar and Wind Energy zoning, Storm Water Management, Design Guidelines, Transfer of Development Rights, Mill Re-use Zoning, Chapter 40R Smart Growth Districts, Form-based Codes, Inclusionary Housing, Floodplain and River Protection, and Green Development Performance Standards
- Low Impact Development Standards and Stormwater Zoning
- Master Planning & Updates
- Town Center Revitalization Studies
- Green Communities Designations
- Permitting Guides and Flow Charts
- Comprehensive reviews of zoning to ensure compliance with state law and sound planning practices
- Developing/updating Subdivision Regulations
- Developing/updating Open Space Recreation Plans
- Visioning & Corridor Studies

***MUNICIPAL PARTNERSHIPS***

- Shared Conservation Agent
- Multi-Town Regional School District Budget Planning
- Streamlining and Regionalizing Local Permitting
- Shared Emergency Dispatch Services
- Regional Dam Services
- Strategic Solid Waste Assessment and Organic Waste Management
- Regional Highway Department and Stormwater Services
- Expansion of Regional School Districts
- Regional Purchasing Consortium for Highway Dep. Services & Materials
- Regional Health Services
- Regionalization of Stormwater Services
- Regionalization of Energy Efficiency Services
- Regional Energy Auditing and Building Efficiency Services
- Regional Board of Health Services
- Bike Sharing Programs
- Intermunicipal Water Supply Agreements
- Regional GIS Services

***COMMUNITIES ASSISTED***

Agawam  
Amherst  
Belchertown  
Brimfield  
Chester  
Chesterfield  
Chicopee  
Cummington  
East Longmeadow  
Easthampton  
Goshen  
Granby  
Granville  
Hadley

Hatfield  
Holland  
Holyoke  
Huntington  
Longmeadow  
Ludlow  
Middlefield  
Monson  
Montgomery  
Northampton  
Palmer  
Pelham  
Plainfield  
Russell

South Hadley  
Southampton  
Southwick  
Springfield  
Tolland  
Ware  
West Springfield  
Westhampton  
Westfield  
Wilbraham  
Williamsburg  
Worthington

## *Municipal Shared Services Program*

This program was developed in response to increasing community requests for assistance in identifying opportunities for efficiency and economy of scale, and to recent state program policies and resources encouraging and incentivizing municipalities and schools to pursue collaboration, partnerships, and shared service opportunities. PVPC member communities have expressed interest in shared service collaborations covering a range of shared municipal support service opportunities including shared inspectional services, shared grant writing, shared information technology services, regional municipal accountant services, bulk purchasing and procurement services, shared public health services, shared police personnel, and shared Conservation Agent services.

Since the inception of this program in 2012, projects of note include studies of school regionalization, shared emergency dispatch operations, regional sealers of weights and measures services, and shared local public health services, as well as working with towns in a regional school district desiring opportunities for working more collaboratively on school budget and related matters. Throughout 2014, new projects were developed and are ongoing efforts within the region. These projects include:

- Shared Conservation Agent—We are working with the Town of Southampton and the City of Easthampton to implement a shared Conservation Agent service program in the effort to assist the municipalities with improving service efficiency. The growing developments and other conservation priorities within the two communities are outpacing of what the Conservation Commissions can handle on a volunteer basis with no Conservation Agent on staff. Using District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA), PVPC studied the existing structure of the Conservation Commissions of both communities to assess and identify needs and opportunities for improving conservation efforts. The study determined that there is a need for shared professional Conservation Agent services to provide assistance to the existing active Conservation Commissions in Southampton and Easthampton to meet their regulatory responsibilities, such as: enforcement and permitting of wetlands regulations; open space planning, preservation, and stewardship; public education; and coordination with community groups for natural resource protection. The outcome of the study resulted in the submission of a CIC grant application to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Administration and Finance. These funds will aid Easthampton and Southampton by paying for startup costs associated with implementing a successful shared Conservation Agent program.
- Shared Police Personnel—The towns of Williamsburg and Chesterfield share borders, characteristics, and police officers. Both are rural communities with part-time police departments. Several part-time officers work in both departments, and there is considerable interaction between the two agencies. The Town of Chesterfield has reached a critical point as its part-time Chief of Police, who has served the town for more than 40 years, is approaching mandatory retirement age. Chesterfield officials reached out to their counterparts in the Town of Williamsburg to discuss the possibility of sharing the services of a police chief or consolidating their police services into a regional department to reduce costs and improve efficiency. The PVPC was engaged by the towns to seek consultant services to conduct an analysis that will determine if whether the municipalities' police departments could benefit from cross-jurisdictional sharing of personnel or regionalization.
- Regional Municipal Accountant Services - This program is being developed to respond to the needs of several small communities for professional accounting services. These services in need include warrant input, journal entries, reconciliation of cash and receivables, yearend closing entries, free cash certification, assistance with tax rate recapitulation and Schedule A preparation. The idea of this regional municipal accountant program is to develop a cost effective and efficient contractual base service through the PVPC that will maintain accurate record keeping, timely report filing, and

compliance with state and federal laws. The PVPC is currently developing this program with four communities.

- Regional Bike Share Feasibility Study - The PVPC is working collaboratively with four (4) communities (Holyoke, Springfield, Amherst, and Northampton) and several area colleges (UMASS Amherst, Springfield College, Springfield Technical Community College, Mt. Holyoke College, Hampshire College, Amherst College, and Smith College) to complete a feasibility study for establishing a pilot-scale Regional Bike Share program; an alternative mode of urban transportation that would stand readily available at central locations and can be used for a fee, free from the worries of ownership of the bicycles. The purpose of this study is to develop a feasibility analysis and implementation framework for establishing a Regional Bike Share program. The focus area is primarily in and around the transit and commuter rail stations with links to the region's college network. The goal is to have a completed plan and its feasibility with recommendations for possible implementation by the end of 2014.
- Regional Roundtables—We have hosted two Regional Roundtable luncheons that focus on pressing issues affecting local governments across the Pioneer Valley Region. The first was focused on the recent changes to the flood regulations. Thomas Young from the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) was the keynote speaker for this event. The second was focused on energy aggregation. Hearing Officers of the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities were the keynote speakers at this luncheon and several energy aggregation brokers were present to engage in the conversation. The purpose of these roundtable events is to give local leaders an opportunity to receive updates/information on these pressing matters and engage in a regional dialogue with their counterpart as to how these issues can be solved together.