

**Mad River Valley Planning District  
Steering Committee  
November 19, 2015**

Present were:

Fayston: Jared Cadwell, Select Board; Carol Chamberlin, Planning Commissioner  
Waitsfield: Kari Dolan, Select Board; Steve Shea, Planning Commissioner  
Warren: Bob Ackland, Select Board; Jim Sanford, Planning Commissioner  
CVRPC: Laurie Emery  
Sugarbush: Margo Wade  
Chamber of Commerce: Peter MacLaren  
MRVPD: Joshua Schwartz; Dara Torre

Others: John Hoogenboom, Moretown Select Board

The minutes of the October 15, 2015 Steering Committee were accepted as written.

**Executive Director's Highlights:** Both V-DAT projects are being implemented; The Watershed-Wide Water Management project (W3MP) is moving forward and outreach initiatives are being discussed; MRV Moves: More than 350 people shared ideas about trails and active transportation; the MRV Housing Coalition will be meeting to strategize on their future work; MRVPD provided a letter of support for a Working Lands Enterprise grant for a proposed big red barn improvement project at Lareau Farm; the MRVPD data report is being updated to analyze and reflect recent data trends; and the UVM Engineering Program is looking for ideas for the spring semester for service-learning projects.

**FY 17 Work Plan:** The work plan includes everything with which the Planning District could be involved. The estimated hours exceed the time available. Highlights include: Economic Vitality: There may be grant funds available to pursue transportation and related economic issues through USDA Rural Business Development grants, as well as "age-friendly" community programs through AARP. Regarding affordable housing, the 2008 MRV Housing report needs to be updated and the Housing Coalition will need MRVPD support. Both V-DAT implementation projects (Warren's Main Street project and Waitsfield's pocket park) require strong, local project management. The W3MP process will require a considerable amount of MRVPD staff time. The lead is the Friends of the Mad River, however. The affordable housing agreement with Sugarbush needs updating. MRVPD staff provides support to the MRV Rural Resource Commission and there is potential for applications to be made for grants.

AARP age-friendly communities: Newport is the only community to date in Vermont that is in this program. AARP would like to have another community involved and they are interested in the Mad River Valley. It requires working on smart growth principles and addressing transportation, energy, and infrastructure and how to integrate them to have an age-friendly community. AARP's co-director is interested in meeting with the Steering Committee to further discuss this opportunity.

The hours estimated for the work listed are 1,164 more than what is available for 1.5 full time equivalent employees. It is also 356 hours more than what is available for two full time employees. The Economic Vitality work does not necessarily directly benefit Sugarbush. In this case, the amount Sugarbush would pay would remain the same as it this year. The demand for services from MRVPD is high and in order to meet that demand, another full time person is needed. Transportation, housing, and placemaking/identity are barriers to improved economic trends. Funding the Planning District to a higher level allows us to provide the assistance in areas such as economic vitality and other areas that are important to everyone in the Valley. The towns need

to participate in order to assist with improving the economy; participate with identifying the needs and solutions.

It's possible that the Memorandum of Understanding with Sugarbush could be amended to no longer reflect four equal shares or have the dues level include funding for special projects for FY 17 for the towns. This would allow time to figure out what's needed over the longer term.

It was asked whether "economic vitality" implies specific deliverables, and if so, can we meet those expectations? Does creating separate funding then segregate the work even though it's all tied together?

During the first year's initiative we will need to find a sustainable model for the Planning District. This also applies to the Chamber and other Valley organizations that need a sustainable model.

We need to identify what this investment will get the town and residents: plans, strategies, concepts, action steps; and use metrics to show what the result is.

Metrics could include outreach in numbers of hours times number of people attending, and grant funds the Planning District has leveraged.

The consensus is to move forward with the work plan and seek additional funding from the towns. The presentation will be sent with the deliverables included.

It was suggested that the Community Calendar be used by all for posting events. [MadRiverValley.com](http://MadRiverValley.com)

**Meetings:** The town leadership meeting is scheduled for December 9, 6 to 9 p.m. at the Waitsfield Elementary School. Members of the select boards, planning commissions, and development review boards are invited.

The Economic Summit update is scheduled for December 17 at the Gate House, Sugarbush, 5 to 7:30 p.m. with food and followed by the Festival of Lights ceremony. The focus of the meeting is on engagement by topics with a facilitator for each topic, and focusing on the community as the resource to make things happen.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 21, 2016. Members will also be meeting December 17, 2015 for the Valley town leadership meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Emery