

The **Middlesex Canal Association**, in cooperation with the **Middlesex Canal Commission**, respectfully requests grant support of **\$150,000** to undertake a long-awaited building project: a new **Middlesex Canal Museum and Visitor Center**, in a recently donated historic mill building, to be the centerpiece of the proposed **Middlesex Canal Heritage Park** at the Mill Pond in North Billerica, Massachusetts.

Note. The Billerica Mills Historic District is on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Park, a joint project of the Middlesex Canal Association and Commission, has been in planning stages for two decades. (The 3-acre Park is part of a larger project underway to restore extant sections of the canal in the 9 cities and towns through which it ran.) Grants for other portions of the project been received, extensive master strategic planning accomplished, landscape engineering maps drawn up, and now that the deed for the donated mill building to house the Museum and Visitor Center has been formally transferred, fundraising toward renovation work can begin.

The donated building is an untouched mid-19th century industrial warehouse, built untouched 19th century No mid as building might be 1880. right on the spot where the Canal's first shovelful was dug in 1793. It overlooks the 1794

millpond and waterfall on the Concord River, the canal's original water source and high point, which in bygone days provided waterpower to two huge brick mills. (Both are now renovated complexes housing a variety of businesses, and of historic interest in their own right.) The **Middlesex Canal Museum and Visitor Center** currently rents space in one of these mills.

The Museum was created to preserve and illuminate the history of the Middlesex Canal. Built 1793-1803, the Canal was the engineering marvel of its time. Because of the canal's great historical significance, and its huge impact on the early commercial viability of New England and the Industrial Revolution, it has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places, and designated a National Historical Engineering Landmark. The museum, opened in 2000, features models, maps, 2001

drawings, artifacts, and other fascinating reminders of an era and a technology that helped to shape the world we live in today. Built and run entirely by volunteers, the museum is both delightful and impressive, with sophisticated displays, publications, programming, archives, and mission. Over the years, the museum has welcomed thousands of visitors. The capable and expert volunteer board, along with the 200+

As a round number, 200, no plus. Membership is 200- members of the Association, are passionate about the canal and this museum. They see their mission not only to conserve the relics of the Canal, but also to educate the artifacts?

They see their mission as the development of the Middlesex Canal Heritage Park between Lowell and Boston for the benefit of present and future generations, as was prayed with the first shovelful in 1794. The museum will be used to educate the

next generations: they have pioneered an innovative curriculum for schoolchildren studying local history, and training for their teachers. They recently recorded QR-coded audio tour information to reach the public with state-of-art technology.

Currently occupying a portion of the old Faulkner Mills, the experience of the Museum has been enriched by the historic ambience of the mills complex. However, problems with the current site (limited space, poor air quality, noise from adjacent shops, high rent) and the prospect of an improved structure in a renovated space, integrated into the Heritage Park, make this the right time to move. The goal of this fundraising effort is to enable the Museum to move from its current substandard space to the newly renovated building, which is large enough for exhibits as well as offices and a caretaker's unit, and sited ideally within the Heritage Park. The new space would also offer space and opportunity for related exhibits and initiatives. For example, the small railroad exhibit which is part of the Canal Museum could be expanded to illustrate some of the larger history of Transportation. The site is also perfect for installation of energy-efficient systems, such as rooftop solar, geothermal heat, and power generation from the adjacent waterfall, which could be interpreted to the public as well as provide power to the new museum.

But, however promising and picturesque the new building may be, it has been unoccupied for many years, and will require a total rebuild of all but the brick shell. To accomplish this, the renovation project will proceed in four stages, as described below. We are currently seeking support from *(name of foundation)* for Stage 1, and hope that we can in the future approach you again for support in Stages 2-4.

MIDDLESEX CANAL MUSEUM AND VISITOR CENTER BUILDING PROJECT

Stage 1: SECURE BUILDING; CONDUCT INITIAL EVALUATION: \$150,000

to be completed by Fall, 2013

Building

A. Re-roof	\$80,000
B. Sandblast and re-point brickwork as needed	\$30,000
C. Remove overgrown vegetation	\$10,000
D. Building safety issues: alarms, sprinklers	\$10,000
E. Fence along riverbank	\$ 5,000

Personnel

F. Structural Engineer evaluation	\$ 5,000
G. Preliminary architectural drawings	\$ 5,000
H. Administrative Support and Overhead	\$ 5,000

Stage 2: MUSEUM DESIGN

Winter 2013-4

Stage 3: MUSEUM BUILD-OUT

Spring & Summer 2014

Stage 4: MOVE TO NEW MUSEUM

Fall 2014

For additional information on the Museum, the Canal, and the Commission, see: <http://www.middlesexcanal.org>. In particular, please note (under the "Commission" tab) the extensive design work completed to date on the Heritage Park, and the route of the Canal, as well as the overall Strategic Plan which this project is a portion of.

Notes

Middlesex Canal Heritage Park is used in the 1977 law establishing the Middlesex Canal Commission.

The purposes for which the corporation is formed are as follows: }
To acquire, restore and preserve all extant remains of the old Middlesex Canal; to establish a museum devoted to the history of said Canal and of transportation in general; to establish along the route of said Canal a park or parks for public recreational and educational use; to engage in historical research and to publish historical, literary and scientific works concerning said Canal, the area formerly served by it and the era during which it was active; and through such means to educate the general public concerning the early history of the United States.

Above from the 1963 Articles of Incorporation of the Association.

"May the Eye of Wisdom and the Eternal Mind aid this work designed for the benefit of the present & all Future Generations."

Loammi Baldwin, Sept 10, 1794.