The FRCOG is a governmental body that serves and assists the municipalities of Franklin County as effectively and efficiently as possible. We provide regional and municipal services to our member towns using a diversity of funding sources and strategies.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

BROWNFIELDS

The Regional Brownfields Program supports assessment and clean-up of potentially contaminated sites for the purpose of returning them to productive use. Under the FRCOG’s current EPA grant, over $109,000 of environmental site assessment work was conducted on eleven sites in six towns in 2015. These sites included vacant industrial properties acquired by towns through tax title proceedings, and privately owned parcels with a history of automotive repair use and/or dumping of debris. Through a separate EPA grant, the FRCOG administered a revolving loan fund and subgrant program to support brownfields clean-up on eligible properties. In 2015, the Town of Greenfield received a $114,560 subgrant to help fund the first phase of the clean-up of the former Lunt Silversmith site.

CONNECTICUT RIVER SCENIC BYWAY CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Work to update the Corridor Management Plan (CMP) for the Connecticut River National Scenic Byway continued in 2015 through a collaborative effort between the FRCOG and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC). A Corridor Management Plan assesses cultural, historic, natural, scenic and other resources along a Scenic Byway and makes recommendations for protection and promotion efforts. The original CMP was completed in 1998, with the update scheduled for completion in the Spring, 2016. The updated Plan will help guide future projects and funding pursuits.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA) WORK

The FRCOG conducts planning activities that foster economic development and maintain the region’s eligibility for select federal funding programs. With funding from an EDA grant, and with guidance from the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee, FRCOG staff completed the 2015 CEDS Plan in June, 2015. The Plan provides an overview of the regional economy and identifies key strategies to promote job growth and spur investment. Specific tasks included providing technical assistance to local communities, assisting mill redevelopment efforts, promoting available industrial sites, supporting industry cluster initiatives, and collaborating with neighboring regions to leverage new opportunities. Collaborative work with organizations in southeastern Vermont and southwestern New Hampshire led to the first meeting of economic and community leaders from the tri-state area to discuss shared economic conditions and opportunities. Since then, the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation received an EDA grant to enhance the “green” building industry in the broader region and has given a subaward to the FRCOG to foster further tri-state collaboration.

Data snapshot from the 2015 CEDS Plan.
LAST MILE BROADBAND EFFORTS
The Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) has broken last mile broadband deployment into two projects: bringing service to 45 unserved communities, and expanding service to 11 underserved cable communities. The FRCOG assisted MBI and the region with both projects in 2015. The FRCOG hired a municipal financial expert that provided assistance to Select Boards and Finance Committees considering municipal bonding for a fiber-to-the-home network. This work included analyzing the potential cost of bond payments for the municipality, reviewing the implications of Proposition 2 ½, and estimating tax bill impacts for property owners. In addition, the FRCOG helped the MBI organize five outreach events held in April, 2015. Staff also helped the MBI assess proposals submitted by providers interested in expanding broadband to partially served cable towns, and worked with the impacted Franklin County towns to move this project forward.

ERVING USHER MILL DEVELOPMENT
The FRCOG continued to work with Erving’s Usher Mill Reuse Committee and developed a conceptual design to create a park that respects the river and the environment through the use of Low Impact Development techniques. At an Erving Special Town Meeting, voters overwhelming approved the use of $775,000 from Town funds to help complete the project. The Town was then awarded a $400,000 grant from the Massachusetts Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) to complete the project design and installation, slated for 2017.

PASSENGER RAIL
After nearly 30 years, passenger rail returned to Greenfield and Franklin County in 2015 with the relocation of Amtrak’s “Vermonter” service to the newly refurbished Connecticut River Main Line tracks. Continuing work in 2016, the FRCOG, MassDOT, Congressman McGovern’s office and the Pioneer Valley Commission will study the feasibility and cost of establishing commuter rail service between Greenfield and Springfield.

ERVING INTERNATIONAL PAPER REUSE FEASIBILITY STUDY
During 2015, the FRCOG assisted the Town of Erving in conducting a Feasibility Study to identify potential reuse options for the former International Paper Mill Facility. The study included a complete Interior Hazardous Materials Assessment funded by the FRCOG Regional Brownfield Program.
MOHAWK TRAIL HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROJECT

With funding from the National Scenic Byway Program, the FRCOG and the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission continued working together to encourage the preservation of historic properties along the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway. As part of this project, Massachusetts Historical Commission nomination packets for the National Register of Historic Places were submitted for the Riverside area of Gill, and the Shelburne Free Library in Shelburne. In addition, work was completed to determine the feasibility of developing and administering a revolving loan fund program to provide financing to willing landowners to rehabilitate significant historic properties along the Mohawk Trail.

SCENIC BYWAYS LAND PROTECTION

Staff continued working with the Franklin Land Trust, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Wildlife to permanently protect important scenic, natural and agricultural landscapes along the scenic byways in Franklin County. In 2015, 143 acres of the Beers Mountain property in Northfield was permanently protected, bringing the total amount of land protected to date under this program to 1,279 acres.

WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS SCENIC BYWAY PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN

The FRCOG, the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, and MassDOT completed a marketing campaign for the seven designated Scenic Byways in western Massachusetts. The overall goal of the project was to brand and promote these Scenic Byways as local and regional travel destinations. Over the course of the project marketing logos and brochures were developed, a website was launched, and a way-finding sign system was installed along the byways informing travelers that they are on a Scenic Byway, and assisting them in finding tourist destinations.
COMMUNITIES THAT CARE COALITION

Partnership for Youth co-hosts the Communities That Care Coalition with Community Action. This effort has been successful in reducing youth substance use in the region, and has now taken on the additional goal of improving youth nutrition and physical activity through policy, systems, and environment change. In 2015, PFY staff presented at the National Collaborative for Education and Health Substance Use Working Group in Washington DC. The Coalition was also featured in an article in the Municipal Advocate, and staff had a paper accepted to the Journal of the Institute of Medicine.

COMMUNITY USE

The FRCOG continues to promote community use (also known as shared use or joint use) to make it easier for owners to open local buildings and grounds at off times in order for residents to exercise and engage in other recreational activities. The FRCOG staff organized a training on Community Use in November 2015, and laid out the expectations and responsibilities of everyone sharing space. The training featured staff from the Harvard Law School Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation (CHLPI), who developed the Massachusetts Joint Use Toolkit. The training targeted school committees, municipal staff and volunteers, and interested community members.

ALCOHOL PURCHASE SURVEYS

The FRCOG Partnership for Youth (PFY) staff continued the Rewards and Reminders program (a complement to the Compliance Checks) for all off-premise alcohol vendors in the County to encourage them to follow the best practice of asking for identification from anyone who appears to be under the age of 30. Servers who card are congratulated, and store owners are notified of the outcome of each quarterly visit. In 2015, 95 of 99 checks passed the test, amounting to 96% of licensed, off-premise establishments asking for identification from the 21-24 year old mystery shopper.

DIABETES PREVENTION PROGRAM

As part of expanded Mass in Motion efforts, FRCOG staff are working with two local YMCAs to promote their Diabetes Prevention Programs (DPP). DPP is a one-year (25 session) group program for people who have been identified as Pre-diabetic. Its goal is to guide them in making behavior changes related to nutrition and physical activity that will help prevent the onset of diabetes. Athol YMCA has been running DPP groups throughout 2015 and the Greenfield YMCA put the structure in place during 2015 to begin groups in early 2016. This program is part of a national study by the Centers for Disease Control to determine if community-based agencies can run diabetes prevention programs as successfully, and more cost-effectively, than clinical sites.

MASS IN MOTION

Mass in Motion is a statewide movement that promotes opportunities for healthy eating and active living in the places people live, learn, work and play. Franklin County has been part of Mass in Motion since 2012, and in 2015, became one of four communities to receive expanded funding to focus on prevention of diabetes, heart disease and stroke through efforts to increase walking, improve access to lifestyle change programs, and increase access to fresh foods for all. A newly-formed Steering Committee has representation from town administrators, recreation commissions, healthcare institutions and boards of health. This committee will track progress on our nutrition and physical activity outcomes, and strategies associated with making healthy choices easier in our region.
LYME DISEASE PREVENTION

Lyme Disease continues to be a major health issue in Franklin County. During 2015, the FRCOG’s Cooperative Public Health Service health district offered free and subsidized tick tests to residents in its ten towns through the Massachusetts Tickborne Disease Network. The district also placed tick safety signs in town parks, schools, and day care centers. Thirty-five percent of local ticks tested positive for Lyme, 4% for Anaplasmosis, and 1.7% for Babesiosis, both new diseases for our region. Ticks were found on residents from early April through December, indicating that tickborne diseases are a nearly year-round threat.

ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION ROADMAPS TO HEALTH ACTION AWARD

Franklin County was awarded a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation “Roadmaps to Health Action Award” in the Spring, 2015. This award recognizes the progress made in building a culture of health in Franklin County and provides one year of coaching and $10,000 of funding to work on areas that need more support. FRCOG staff are working with the Community Benefits Advisory Council of Baystate Franklin Medical Center to improve community input into the Community Health Needs Assessment and to convene partners throughout the region to participate in a collaborative Community Health Improvement Plan that would reflect the common goals of multiple sectors and stakeholders.

PROMOTING FARM TO INSTITUTION

FRCOG staff are working with the Franklin County Food Council and Greater Quabbin Food Alliance to increase the amount of local food used by institutional food services (schools and colleges, nursing homes, the jail, the hospital, etc.). This group held a training on USDA local food procurement, targeting K-12 school food service directors, business managers, local organizations and procurement staff in November, 2015. Food services representatives from all Franklin County school districts attended. The training included presentations by local and regional resource providers, including MA Farm to School, Franklin County CDC, CISA, Just Roots, Franklin County Solid Waste District, Apex Farm, Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust and the MA Public Health Association.

OPIOID TASK FORCE OF FRANKLIN COUNTY

The FRCOG is a partner in the regional effort to combat heroin and prescription drug abuse in Franklin County/North Quabbin. Staff host the Healthcare Solutions Subcommittee, made up of medical providers, recovery experts, higher education, and human service organizations. The Partnership for Youth has worked with area middle schools to promote and support the implementation of the evidence-based LifeSkills curriculum. In 2015, with support from Baystate Franklin Medical Center and the Opioid Task Force, PFY hosted 2 teacher trainings, and ensured that staff from every Franklin County and North Quabbin middle school received training. In addition, PFY staff have supported the program by hosting quarterly meetings of LifeSkills teachers and supporters, and by providing evaluation services for schools implementing the program. The LifeSkills program has been shown to be highly effective in reducing youth substance use, and all Franklin County middle schools have now begun implementing the program.
PARENT SOCIAL MARKETING CAMPAIGN

The messages parents give their children have a tremendous influence on their children’s behavior. PFY staff disseminated messages (generously printed by Baystate Franklin Medical Center) through post cards and flyers sent to parents of middle and high school students in participating Franklin County and North Quabbin schools.

COMPLIANCE CHECKS

Through a Memorandum of Understanding with 16 towns, local police departments and PFY staff conducted alcohol compliance checks at all licensed establishments in their towns in 2015. An average of 93% of establishments asked underage mystery shoppers for identification—a very high compliance rate!

TEEN HEALTH SURVEY

Results from the 2015 Teen Health Survey show that youth alcohol use, tobacco use, marijuana use, and binge drinking have all decreased significantly among Franklin County and North Quabbin middle and high school students over the thirteen years of the Partnership for Youth’s work co-leading the Communities That Care Coalition. Most youth are choosing not to drink, smoke, or use drugs. The survey also shows that the risk factors that the coalition has set as priorities to improve (Poor Family Management, Parental Attitudes Favorable to Youth Substance Use, and Community Laws and Norms Favorable to Youth Substance Use) have all improved, as well.

Results from the 2003-2015 Teen Health Survey.
COLLABORATIVE PUBLIC SAFETY INITIATIVES IN FRANKLIN COUNTY

In 2015, the FRCOG worked to support a number of regional public safety department collaborations including the continued development of Regional Fire Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs), and the organization and procurement of new hoses, and hose and pumper testing. Staff also supported shared fire reporting by purchasing tablet computers with specialized software for each Fire Department through a State Community Innovation Challenge grant. The FRCOG provided technical assistance to Towns interested in developing a regional call force, and to the Towns of Erving, New Salem, Warwick, and Wendell to formalize their agreement with Orange as their Emergency Medical Service. At the request of Town Select Boards, the FRCOG provided funding for a cost/benefit assessment of regionalization of the Deerfield, Sunderland, and Whately police departments.

FRANKLIN COUNTY COOPERATIVE INSPECTION PROGRAM

The FCCIP provided building, zoning, plumbing, wiring and code enforcement services to 15 towns, issuing 1,391 building permits that included 24 permits for new single family dwellings and 9 permits for new commercial structures. There were 782 wiring permits and 559 plumbing and gas permits. In addition, 169 periodic inspections that assess safety in public and multi-unit buildings were performed and Certificates of Inspection issued. Online permit applications have been simplified and made more user-friendly and permit applications for fire protection, tents, and solid fuel burning appliances have been added. As of January 1, 2016, there were 3,573 registered users, and since its launch on July 1, 2011 there have been 10,735 online permit applications.

COOPERATIVE PURCHASING PROGRAM

The Cooperative Purchasing Program annually provides bidding and contract administration services for highway products and services, fuel procurement for towns and nonprofits, dog tags and licenses for over 50 towns in 5 counties, elevator maintenance services, and fire department products and testing services. In addition to the cooperative bids, the FRCOG Chief Procurement Officer (CPO) assisted several towns in 2015 with more complex procurements for DOER grant funded projects for weatherization, wood pellet boiler system design and installation, and advanced HVAC. Several county libraries received grants to study expansion and the FRCOG assisted with design procurement for 2 library feasibility studies. Other projects include assisting several area human services agencies conduct a joint procurement for facility consolidation planning, study services for manufacturing plant reuse, recreational park design, and energy efficiency consulting services. In 2015, FRCOG’s CPO was named to the Executive Board of the Massachusetts Association of Public Purchasing Officials to help bring local concerns to the state level. She remains available to provide low and no cost procurement advice to towns as they navigate the changing landscape of Massachusetts’ procurement laws and regulations.

TOWN ACCOUNTING PROGRAM

The Town Accounting Program provides quality municipal accounting services to 12 towns including Ashfield, Bernardston, Buckland, Conway, Gill, Leverett, New Salem, Shelburne, Sunderland, Wendell, Whately, and Williamsburg. The program provides member towns with qualified, professional accounting staff, access to shared software at a greatly reduced cost, and a service product completed in adherence to the requirements of Massachusetts General Laws and the Uniform Municipal Accounting System.
COOPERATIVE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE (CPHS)

The Franklin County Cooperative Health District provides comprehensive municipal public health services to the ten communities of Buckland, Charlemont, Conway, Deerfield, Gill, Hawley, Heath, Leyden, Monroe and Shelburne. The CPHS has four public health programs: community sanitation; food safety; Title 5 and private well safety; and public health nursing. Each member community has a representative on the CPHS Oversight Board, which meets monthly to review budgets and potential grant applications, and to draft policies. The 2015 district programming highlights include:

- Provided Public Health Nursing services to over 217 residents living with chronic diseases to improve management of their own symptoms and medications.
- Processed nearly 200 permits from the district’s online permitting program and registered 240 users.
- Conducted approximately 400 food, septic, well, housing, camp, motel, B&B, and pool inspections in member towns.
- Received a new food safety grant that brings low-cost food service employee training and improved data collection to the member towns and to more than 60 food establishments.
- Provided free tick testing for over 200 district residents. Additional Lyme prevention efforts included billboards and prevention signs at parks, schools, and day care centers.
- Administered over 900 flu vaccinations in flu clinics in district towns.
- Secured $25,000 in grant funding to support district health initiatives.

PROPOSED KINDER MORGAN-TGP NORTHEAST ENERGY DIRECT GAS PIPELINE

Eight Franklin County towns will be directly impacted by the proposed Northeast Energy Direct (NED) pipeline (Ashfield, Conway, Shelburne, Deerfield, Montague, Erving, Northfield and Warwick) with approximately 34 miles of pipeline traversing Franklin County. FRCOG staff spent 2015 educating ourselves and officials from the impacted towns about the proposed project, its potential impacts, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) review and approval process. A Regional Pipeline Advisory Committee made up of local officials from the eight impacted communities was formed last February and met monthly. The FRCOG convened the other impacted regional planning agencies from Massachusetts, New York and New Hampshire to share information and to avoid duplication of effort. The FRCOG Council approved use of $15,000 of “free cash” to provide legal and technical assistance, $10,000 of which was used to hire a Washington DC-based attorney specializing in gas pipelines and the FERC process. Documents and testimony created and submitted in 2015 included:

- Submission of detailed study requests to FERC to be included in the Environmental Impact Study that will be completed to assess the impacts of the project.
- Submission of a joint letter to FERC by the FRCOG and other regional planning agencies questioning whether the Kinder Morgan application for the pipeline was adequate and that the FERC review timeline was too short.
- Submission to FERC requesting formal intervenor status for the FRCOG.
- Development of a model Major Development Bylaw to protect communities from construction impacts should the project or any major project proceed in a community.
- Development of special study scopes that would analyze the pipeline’s potential construction and long-term impacts on water quality and transportation infrastructure for four communities that have pooled local money.
- Request to FERC for a formal evidentiary hearing on the need for the proposed NED gas pipeline project.

ZONING & GENERAL BYLAW TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

In 2015, the FRCOG provided technical assistance to Conway, Gill, Hawley, and Shelburne on zoning and general bylaws addressing open space development, solar energy facilities, medical marijuana and large scale commercial and industrial facilities.
WORKSHOPS AND TRAINING SESSIONS

During 2015, the FRCOG held many workshop and training sessions for municipal officials and employees.

PARTNERSHIP FOR YOUTH WORKSHOPS:
- Community Use Training with Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation of Harvard Law School
- Local Food Procurement Training for K-12 Food Service Directors (in partnership with Franklin County Food Council and Greater Quabbin Food Alliance)
- Family Dinner Training. Hosted event for community agencies working to improve family management, with guest speaker from the Family Dinner Project.
- TIPS Server Training (for bars & restaurants)

PLANNING AND CONSERVATION WORKSHOPS:
- Citizen Planner Training Collaborative: Site Plan Review
- Western Millers River Watershed Low Impact Development (LID) Workshop Series:
  - Workshop 1: Introduction to Stormwater Management in the Western Millers River Watershed
  - Workshop 2: Franklin County LID Field Trip & LID Technologies and Best Management Practices
  - Workshop 3: Incorporating LID into Local Bylaws and Public Projects

REGIONAL PREPAREDNESS WORKSHOPS:
- Emerging Trends in Hazardous Materials
- Community Organizations Active in Disasters Summit
- Emergency Operations Center training for members of the Pioneer Valley Community Organizations Active in Disasters
- Emergency Rest Centers and Community Organizations Active in Disasters, presented at a FEMA Region 1 conference
- Emergency Rest Centers for Faith-Based Organizations
- Rail Safety Issues for First Responders
- What is a Multi-Agency Coordination Center?
- Working with Utility Companies during a Storm
- Crisis Incident Stress Management

SELECT BOARD ESSENTIALS WORKSHOPS:
- Municipal Financial Management Essentials
- You’re the Boss: Personnel Legal Guidance for Selectboards
- Performance Measurement for Small Towns
- Regional School Minimum Contributions Explained
- Selectboard 101
- Shepherding Pricey Projects from Conception to Approval
- Managing Conflict on Town Boards
- USDA Rural Development Programs and Your Town

WESTERN REGIONAL HOMELAND SECURITY ADVISORY COUNCIL TRAINING SESSIONS:
- Anti-Terrorism Tabletop Exercise Series
- Hazmat Emerging Trends for First Responders
- Hazmat Emerging Trends for Boards of Health
- Pre-hospital Trauma Life Support Training
- Medical Management of CBNRE (Chemical, Biological, Nuclear, Radiological, Explosive) Incidents Training
- Public Information Officer / Joint Information System Training
- Emergency Operations Center Operations & Planning Training
- Northwest Massachusetts Incident Management Team Position Specific Training
CITIZEN CORPS TEAMS

The Disaster Animal Response Team (DART) partnered this year with the Hawlemont Emergency Dispensing Site (EDS) to run a flu/rabies clinic. Twenty-one animals were vaccinated from 18 homes ranging from the town of Rowe to Wendell. This innovative collaboration served as a training exercise for EDS and DART volunteers and built relationships that will be beneficial during an actual response.

FRANKLIN COUNTY EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION SYSTEM (FCECS)

The FRCOG owns and maintains the multi-site FCECS that provides access to emergency communication services for first responders in all Franklin County towns and some Worcester County towns. To ensure that the system is working as optimally as possible, the following projects were initiated in 2015, some of which will continue into the coming year:

- The system manager documented equipment and settings at each site to create an up-to-date binder of all system information, and worked in consultation with equipment manufacturers to tweak parts of the system making it easier to adjust settings, diagnose problems, and make it more resistant to disruption after power outages.
- Radio equipment was added in Plainfield to address radio “dead spots” in Ashfield.
- A repair ticket system was implemented to streamline problem reporting.
- A complete system-wide study, funded by a grant from the Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council, began in the fall of 2015 and will conclude in March, 2016.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN DISASTERS (COAD) AND EMERGENCY REST CENTERS

With support from the Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council, Regional Preparedness staff continued working with community organizations in the four counties of western Massachusetts to organize two COADs in western Massachusetts. We now have over 150 organizations on our notification list (a 25% increase over last year) including regional transit authorities, employment services, faith-based organizations, public schools, libraries, United Way chapters, the American Red Cross, Salvation Army chapters, the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, the Franklin County Home Care Corporation, and several local food pantries.

FRANKLIN COUNTY REGIONAL SHELTER PLAN UPDATE

Staff worked with officials in the Towns of Buckland, Colrain, Greenfield, Montague, and Orange to develop site plans and Memoranda of Agreement for potential regional shelters in Franklin County. The Franklin County REPC Planning Subcommittee serves as the Working Group overseeing this project. Staff attended FCREPC Planning Subcommittee meetings, quarterly meetings of the REPC, and monthly meetings of WRHSAC’s Pan Flu/Planning Subcommittee to provide status updates on the project.
REGIONAL PREPAREDNESS

HOMELAND SECURITY FIDUCIARY
Since 2004 the FRCOG has served as fiduciary for the Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council (WHRSAC) that oversees the State Homeland Security grant funds for the four Western Massachusetts counties. WHRSAC projects are regional in scope, with a focus on building and enhancing capabilities that enable the region to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from threats and hazards, both natural and human-caused. Many WHRSAC’s 2015 projects were of benefit to Franklin County.

BORDEN MOUNTAIN TO GREAT HILL MICROWAVE LINK
WRHSAC upgraded the public safety communications microwave link between Borden Mountain in Savoy and Great Hill in Shelburne. This link is part of the Franklin County Emergency Communications System. The link has been upgraded to a 6GHz link and includes dual redundant hot radios which improve the system’s resilience.

CHILDREN IN DISASTERS CONFERENCE
“The Children in Disasters Conference 2015: Keeping Kids Safe” was a kick-off event for a multiphase WRHSAC project “Children in Disasters Emergency Preparedness.” This groundbreaking conference was designed for all emergency response professionals and planners who need to consider the safety and well-being of children as they plan, respond and recover from any all-hazard incident, disaster or event. A total of 195 individuals attended the conference from a broad range of disciplines, including emergency preparedness professionals, school administrators, nursing students, early childhood educators, and child care service providers. Using significant guidance gained from the speakers and conference attendees, WRHSAC is prioritizing next steps for the region in this important area of whole community emergency preparedness.

FRANKLIN COUNTY SPECIAL RESPONSE TEAM
WRHSAC is supporting the newly formed Franklin County Special Response Team with funds for both specialized equipment and training. The team consists of personnel from both the Franklin County Sheriff’s Office and the Greenfield Police Department. WRHSAC continues support of the team in 2016.

INFLATABLE PORTABLE SHELTER
WRHSAC purchased a portable, inflatable, 20’ X 15’ shelter. The shelter can be set up within 5 minutes (electricity needed) and has both heating and cooling capabilities. The shelter can be used in emergency situations, such as search and rescue operations and disaster response, or large planned events such as fairs or parades. It can serve as an incident command center, responder shelter/rehab, victim/survivor shelter, or any other shelter as needed. The shelter is housed and maintained by the Berkshire County Sheriff’s Office and is available to any response agencies or municipality throughout western Massachusetts.

MULTI AGENCY COORDINATION CENTER
WRHSAC has established the Multi-Agency Coordination Center project to explore and establish a regional approach to managing large emergencies and disasters. Over the last several years, significant emergencies affecting Western Massachusetts communities have demonstrated the need for increased coordination, the sharing of scarce resources, and a regional approach to emergency management. WRHSAC is taking a phased approach to this project. During 2015, Phase II of the project established a pilot MACC in Berkshire County, with Phase III, currently underway, focusing on establishing a MACC in Franklin County.
MOHAWK AREA PUBLIC HEALTH COALITION (MAPHCO)

During the formation of the Region 1 Health and Medical Coordinating Coalition (HMCC), MAPHCO members comprised a large portion of the participating local public health officials, offering dedicated service and helpful opinions at the monthly planning meetings. MAPHCO also continued to exercise their emergency dispensing site (EDS) plans, with the Hawlemont region conducting the first combined flu and rabies clinic in Franklin County. With support from the Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council, the MAPHCO Steering Committee held a training for local board of health members to become familiar with emerging hazardous material threats in unexpected places, namely from the manufacture of illicit substances in residences. MAPHCO continues to pursue initiatives started in 2015, including supporting local flu clinics and an effort to establish mosquito control services in participating communities.

REGIONAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE (REPC)

Highlights for 2015 included obtaining re-certification as a recognized hazardous materials emergency planning committee, working with the Franklin Regional Transit Authority on a memorandum of agreement allowing firefighters to drive FRTA vehicles during an evacuation effort; using DLTA funds to research issues around planning for emergencies related to smaller, locally-owned dams; and receiving FEMA approval for a regional debris management plan.

REGION 1 HEALTH AND MEDICAL COORDINATING COALITION (HMCC)

In July, the COG won a competitive bid to become the sponsoring agency of one of six regional health and medical coalitions in the State. The HMCC includes 94 towns in western Massachusetts, ten hospitals, five community health centers, and a multitude of long-term care facilities and emergency medical services agencies. By July 2016, HMCC staff will deliver 24/7/365 on-call coverage for those five disciplines.
ADVOCACY

An important function of the FRCOG is to advocate for issues important to the Franklin County region and its communities and residents. Throughout the year, FRCOG staff testify at public hearings, provide input to pending legislation and policy that affects the Franklin County region, and bring important matters and issues to the FRCOG advisory council and member municipalities. The FRCOG also annually co-sponsors Senator Rosenberg’s Municipal Conference that brings together municipal officials, state legislators, and state agency heads. 2014 advocacy efforts included:

- Expansion of passenger rail opportunities between Greenfield and Springfield
- FERC relicensing of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Facility and Turners Falls Pool
- Transfer of FRCOG employees to the Massachusetts State Retirement System
- Proposed improvements to the DEP’s Transient Non-Community Water Supply permitting process
- Zoning & Land Use Reform
- Decommissioning of Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant
- Proposed Natural Gas Pipeline
- Green Communities Stretch Energy Code
- Siting of Land Based Wind Facilities

BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

FRCOG staff sit on a variety of boards and committees representing the FRCOG, the region and Franklin County communities both in professional and personal capacities. In 2014 these included:

- Baystate Franklin Medical Center Community Benefits Advisory Council
- Building Officials of Western Massachusetts
- Community Software Consortium Financial Advisory Group
- Creating Resilient Communities
- Department of Public Health’s Local State Advisory Committee
- Economic Development Council of Western MA Economic Development Partners, Infrastructure Committee, and Home Field Advantage Committee
- Economic Resiliency in the Northern Tier Collaborators
- Franklin County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
- Franklin County Community Development Corporation Board of Directors
- Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority Board of Commissioners
- Fostering Art & Culture Partnership in Franklin County
- Franklin Region Economic Development Initiative (FREDI)
- Gill-Montague Community School Partnership Executive Council
- Greenfield Safe Schools Safe Streets Steering Committee
- Massachusetts Broadband Institute Board of Directors
- Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Private Well Task Force
- Massachusetts DEP Well Driller Program Technical Advisory Committee
- Massachusetts Municipal Association Policy Committee on Municipal and Regional Administration
- Massachusetts Green Communities Advisory Committee
- Massachusetts Housing Partnership Rural Initiative Advisory Committee
- Massachusetts Technical Assistance Partnership for Prevention (MassTAPP) Steering Committee
- Northwest Massachusetts Incident Management Team Executive Committee
- Opioid Task Force of Franklin County and North Quabbin Executive Committee
- Pioneer Valley Plan for Progress Board of Trustees
- Rural Development, Inc. Board of Directors
- Small Town Administrators of Massachusetts
- WesternMA Connect Inc. Board of Directors
- Western MA Hoarding Task Force
- Western MA Public Health Association
- WGBY Board of Tribunes
STATE AND NATIONAL PRESENTATIONS BY FRCOG STAFF

FRCOG staff regularly present locally and regionally, but many are honored by being asked to share their expertise at state and national conferences. The following represent a sampling of the larger scale events that included presentations by FRCOG staff on their agendas:

- Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America Mid-Year Training Institute.
- Food for Good: Statewide Hunger Conference, Panelist for Food Access and Transportation.
- Health in All Policies: National Association of County and City Health Officials Webinar, Community Use Project.
- Investing in Girls Alliance State of Girls in Massachusetts.
- Massachusetts Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board Meeting, Bicycling and Walking Initiatives in Franklin County.
- Massachusetts Executive Office for Administration and Finance Municipal Listening Session.
- Massachusetts Food Day, MA Food System Plan.
- MA Food Policy Council Meeting, MA Local Food Action Plan.
- Massachusetts House Ways and Means Committee, proposed FY16 state budget.
- Mass Trails Conference, Farm to Institution efforts in Franklin County/North Quabbin.
- Moving Together Conference, Healthy Transportation in Mass in Motion Communities.
- National Collaborative for Education and Health Substance Use Working Group.
- New England School for Prevention Studies, Prevention in Schools.
- Windham, Vermont Regional Commission Meeting, FRCOG Shared Services.
- Women’s Fund of Western Massachusetts Summit for Success.

Mark Maloni and Tracy Rogers with HMCC planning process facilitators Cate Woolner and Debbie Lynangale from The Mediation and Training Collaborative.
COMMUNITY ENERGY STRATEGIES PILOT PROGRAM

A MassCEC Energy Conservation Marketing Campaign grant is providing for public education and outreach in the Towns of Buckland, Greenfield, Montague and Shelburne. Energy-efficiency marketing materials are being developed to focus on three primary groups: limited income residents, elders, and landlords. Marketing is set to begin in the spring of 2016, and will include posters and other print materials, door knocking, and social media.

FRANKLIN COUNTY FARM AND FOOD SYSTEM PROJECT

Increased production of food in Franklin County and the increased ability for all residents to access and consume more local food are two primary goals of this Henry P. Kendall funded project. Increased production will depend upon more affordable and available farmland, more farmland in permanent protection, more small-batch food processing, and more demand for local food. Increased access and consumption of local food will depend on more public education, increased retailing of local food, and more utilization of SNAP to purchase local food.

MASSACHUSETTS FOOD SYSTEM PLAN

The MA Local Food Action Plan was released in December, 2015. The project, funded through a combination of public and private monies, was managed through a partnership with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, and Massachusetts Workforce Alliance. Praised by Rep. Stephen Kulik as “a road map for how to grow food systems, from land protection and business development, to workforce training,” the MA Local Food Action Plan is in the early stages of implementation, led by the MA Food System Collaborative, a group working to promote a more robust statewide food system.

Education is a common theme throughout the MA Food System Plan, including instructions for hands-on food system education for children, like making maple syrup.
MOHAWK TRAIL WOODLANDS PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

The Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership (MTWP) program is intended to promote natural resource based economic development, forest conservation and community sustainability in a 21-town region in Western Franklin and Northern Berkshire Counties. This area contains extensive natural resources and a significant number of people make their living off of woodlands. In addition, forests in the region provide critical ecological services. The project stakeholders have created a plan and a new model for forest conservation and natural resource-based economic development centered on private forest land ownership. The Project Team is also exploring the possibility of obtaining a State and Federal designation that would recognize the region’s outstanding forestry resources and could bring with it economic and environmental benefits to the region, while keeping land in private ownership.

TURNERS FALLS BASELINE TREE INVENTORY REPORT

The Turners Falls Tree Inventory provides the Town of Montague with a GIS data layer of each town-owned tree’s location, genus, species, common name, height, canopy spread, condition and other vital information. This data layer, along with printed maps, an infographic poster, and report, will be used by the Town’s Planning and Conservation Department and DPW to manage, maintain, and plan for additional plantings of trees in Turners Falls.

The Turners Falls Tree Inventory Report calls for increasing the diversity of tree species to reduce the risk to tree diseases.
WATERSHED RESILIENCY PROJECTS

Flooding is the most common natural hazard in Massachusetts. Every year, flooding and uncontrolled stormwater runoff cause millions of dollars of damage to land and structures, and pose risks to public safety. Maintaining and enhancing the natural ability of a watershed to respond to and reduce stormwater runoff, flooding and erosion is among the most cost effective mitigation strategies available. Over the last decade, the FRCOG secured over $1,000,000 in grant funding for watershed resiliency projects. Highlighted projects for 2015 include:

WESTERN MILLERS RIVER WATERSHED LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT (LID) PROJECT
This project provided resources to assist towns in the Western Millers River Watershed in protecting their local waters from stormwater runoff and flooding. The FRCOG partnered with the Millers River Watershed Council (MRWC) to work with the Planning Boards in the Towns of Montague and Orange to encourage the use of LID techniques. In Montague, project staff worked with local officials to develop Stormwater Control Performance Standards for the proposed new Turnpike Road Industrial Park, and in Orange project staff worked with local officials to develop a Resource Guide for LID Best Management Practices. Staff organized three regional LID training workshops and a field trip to view local LID installations around Franklin County, as well as developed informational materials to encourage adoption of more LID-friendly regulations and policies.

DEERFIELD RIVER WATERSHED RESILIENCY PROJECT
The Deerfield River Watershed contains an abundance of high quality water resources and large blocks of contiguous habitat for wildlife. Stakeholders have identified a need to preserve the green infrastructure and high quality waters of the watershed, increase the watershed’s resiliency to climate change, and identify implementation projects to improve water quality. The FRCOG was awarded a $182,250 319 grant from the MassDEP to develop a comprehensive plan for the Deerfield River Watershed that integrates the statewide Watershed-Based Plan (WBP) strategy, the EPA’s Healthy Watersheds Initiative, and Climate Change Adaptation planning strategies. It will result in on-the-ground change within the watershed by recommending specific, measurable actions to protect and improve water resource conditions.

WHATELY COMMUNITY FOOD ASSESSMENT
The Whately Food Assessment helps the Whately Agricultural Commission make the case for protecting one of the town’s greatest assets – it’s excellent farmland. The report, presented as a series of infographics, addresses the cost of community services and the status of preserved land in Whately to date. The report also provides strategies for protecting more farmland, especially important as the housing market begins to pick up, putting some of Whately’s agricultural land at risk for development.

Infographics are used to communicate findings of the Whately Community Food Assessment to the public, such as the economic impact of farming.
ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION MAPS

A series of three Alternative Transportation Maps were developed for the areas of Greenfield/Turners Falls, Shelburne Falls, and Orange. These maps provide information on the location of bus routes, bus stops, the Franklin County Bikeway, sidewalks, and popular destinations such as parks, schools, and libraries. Also included are tips and resources for taking the bus, walking, and bicycling as a form of transportation. The maps were mailed to households in the target communities, and made available at the JWO Transportation Center and the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, with the goal of encouraging more travel without cars.

BICYCLE AND ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION ADVOCACY

The FRCOG received a 2015 Massachusetts ECO (Excellence in Commuter Options) Pacesetter Award for its work to improve non-motorized commuting options in Franklin County. Staff also participated in the 2015 Baystate Bike Week activities by hosting a breakfast for bicyclists on May 12th. The event was a great opportunity for bicyclists to network with one another, and for staff to discuss additional needs for bicycle infrastructure with the biking community.

BIKE SHARE PROGRAM IN GREENFIELD

Staff investigated the feasibility of starting a bicycle share program in Greenfield, a small urban area. Bike Share programs offer the ability for people to access bicycles for short trips around town that are typically 30 minutes or less in duration. There are a variety of ways secure access, the most popular being “subscription” based services, similar to the Zip Car model for vehicles. Most successful bike share programs are offered in large urban areas, but initial results indicate a limited program could be successful. Additional research and collaboration with Greenfield will be pursued in the coming year to see if a pilot program can be established.

REGIONAL SIGN-MAKING PROJECT

Highway departments will have the opportunity to both create new, or re-laminate existing, road signs with more reflective materials and lettering that meet current visibility requirements, right here in Franklin County with a sign making machine purchased with state DLTA funds. The Greenfield DPW volunteered to host the equipment, and the Cooperative Highway Purchasing Group met to discuss a Use Agreement. The Cooperative Purchasing Program will assist with the purchase of bulk sign blanks and materials. This will result in a significant cost savings to the towns over the years.
**COMPLETE STREETS**

The FRCOG continues to work to promote the Complete Street approach to transportation improvements whenever possible and appropriate. Complete Streets is a strategy for roadway improvements that incorporate safe and accessible options for all travel modes including walking, bicycling, riding transit and vehicles for people of all ages and abilities. The MA Department of Transportation has officially opened the Complete Streets Funding Program Portal, making it possible for communities to access planning and implementation fund to create more complete streets. The FRCOG Planning Department is available to provide technical assistance to towns interested in applying to this program.

The newly painted buffered bike lane along Routes 5 and 10 in Deerfield.

**MOST HAZARDOUS INTERSECTIONS**

Work is underway to update the FRCOG’s list of the most hazardous intersections in Franklin County. This upcoming report will focus on crashes occurring over the most recent three years for which data is available, 2011-2013, and will identify the intersections with the highest rate of severe motor vehicle crashes. The analysis will be complete in the Fall, 2016.

The intersection of Colrain-Shelburne Road and Route 2 in Shelburne is a past high-crash location and site of an upcoming safety improvement project.

**INVENTORY OF BRIDGES AND CULVERTS**

Staff mapped an inventory of all bridges and major culverts for each town in Franklin County. This inventory was overlaid with floodplains and areas identified as susceptible to flooding, with the goal of aiding towns in natural hazard mitigation and emergency response, as well as more effective infrastructure upgrade planning.

A failed culvert in Colrain during Tropical Storm Irene.
PARK(ING) DAY
The FRCOG helped conduct two Park(ING) Day events in Franklin County one day last Fall. The FRCOG and collaborating organizations took over parking spaces in downtown Greenfield and Orange and converted them to temporary public parks to promote local projects and alternative transportation activities in Franklin County. In Greenfield, the FRCOG collaborated with the Greenfield Business Association and the Town of Greenfield’s Sustainable Greenfield Implementation Committee to hold a Park(ING) Day event on Main Street at the corner of Chapman Street. In Orange, the FRCOG collaborated with the Town of Orange to hold a Park(ING) Day event at the corner of West Main Street and South Main Street.

REGIONAL ASSESSMENT OF CRASHES RESULTING IN INJURY
In 2015, FRCOG staff completed a report on motor vehicle crashes since 2002 that have resulted in injuries or fatalities in Franklin County, identifying trends and common factors in severe crashes. The results show that the majority of severe crashes involve a single vehicle and that the most common type of injurious or fatal crash is lane departure. This and other information in the report will support the FRCOG in recommending transportation safety improvements around Franklin County.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN
An update to the region’s Long Range Regional Transportation Plan was completed in 2015. This Plan examined the current transportation infrastructure and looked at future needs and demands across the region. The recommendations in the Plan provide the framework for future transportation projects for all modes of travel, including car, bicycle, walking, train, and bus. The updated Plan found that there is a very strong interest in expanding the transportation system to include more healthy transportation choices that provide alternatives to the singly-occupied car. Specifically, there is a very strong demand for expanded public transit services and improved pedestrian/bicycling facilities in Franklin County.

PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT
Through a joint purchase with several regional planning agencies in Massachusetts, the FRCOG acquired new Pavement Management Software called RoadManager GPMS. The new software is integrated with the GIS system and supports analysis of regional roadways, as well as forecasting repair scenarios and providing robust mapping capability. With this new system, the FRCOG will improve the regional pavement assessment program and is prepared to assist towns in developing their own pavement management programs to maximize their pavement improvement budgets.
TRANSPORTATION

TRANSPORTATION

TRAFFIC COUNTING

In 2015, staff conducted 64 traffic volume counts (including vehicle classification and speed counts) in the following towns: Bernardston, Charlemont, Colrain, Conway, Deerfield, Gill, Greenfield, Hawley, Heath, Leverett, Leyden, Monroe, Montague, New Salem, Northfield, Orange, Rowe, Shelburne, Sunderland, and Wendell. Intersection turning movement counts were also conducted in Sunderland and Shelburne. Each year traffic counts are offered free of charge to Franklin County member municipalities on a first-come first-serve basis. Traffic counts are often used by municipalities for planning purposes and grant applications. Information on all past traffic counts can be obtained by contacting the transportation planning program.

TRANSIT PLANNING COORDINATION WITH FRTA

The Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) completed a Comprehensive Service Analysis in 2015 that examined its fixed route services in the region. The FRCOG partnered with the FRTA to conduct extensive public outreach in 2014 and 2015 for initial data collection, and to gather feedback on the final recommendations. The final recommendations were well-received by the public and endorsed by the FRTA’s Advisory Board in November, 2015. The recommendations will result in much-needed service improvements including more frequent service, more evening service, better connections, and a streamlined fare service. In addition to this work, the FRCOG is also currently partnering with the FRTA to conduct a feasibility study of establishing fixed route bus service to the East County region. This study is in the initial data collection phase and will be completed in 2016.

A public outreach event held at the Greenfield Farmers Market gathered input on transit service needs in Franklin County.

Typical equipment used for conducting automatic traffic counts.
### Franklin Regional Council of Governments
### Consolidated activities for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2015
### with comparative totals for FY 2014

#### Revenues:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Contracts</td>
<td>2,613,857.45</td>
<td>2,372,739.86</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Contracts</td>
<td>563,869.37</td>
<td>480,203.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Contracts</td>
<td>104,998.74</td>
<td>288,818.32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipal Services</td>
<td>1,126,869.95</td>
<td>1,067,180.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charges for Services</td>
<td>23,280.00</td>
<td>173,707.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Member Assessments</td>
<td>372,140.00</td>
<td>573,393.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>1,795.73</td>
<td>3,278.93</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>5,220.20</td>
<td>2,811.84</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenues</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,812,031.44</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,962,133.46</strong></td>
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</table>

#### Expenditures:

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>3,386,530.06</td>
<td>2,847,005.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employee/Retiree Benefits</td>
<td>633,556.78</td>
<td>959,460.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>902,410.00</td>
<td>898,479.14</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,922,496.84</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,704,944.20</strong></td>
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#### Revenues over Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<th>2014</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Revenues over Expenses</td>
<td>-110,465.40*</td>
<td>57,189.26</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fund Balance Beginning of Year</strong></td>
<td>1,493,971.26</td>
<td>1,336,782.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfer to OPEB</td>
<td>-253,684.00</td>
<td>-100,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fund Balance End of Year</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,129,821.86</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,493,971.26</strong></td>
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</table>

#### FUND BALANCES:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restricted</td>
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<td>643,604.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assigned</td>
<td>355,185.00</td>
<td>380,317.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unassigned</td>
<td>463,283.00</td>
<td>470,050.00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,129,822.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,493,971.00</strong></td>
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</table>

For the purposes of this report, intergovernmental indirect and administrative fees received by the general fund have been netted against program expenses.

*Revenues for approximately $70,000 of this deficit were received in advance during FY14. The remaining deficit was due to a loss in the inspection program, which was covered by that program’s fund balance.

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**Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OPEB Trust Funds</td>
<td>$360,669.00</td>
<td>$100,000.00</td>
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2015 FRCOG COUNCIL MEMBERS

ASHFIELD
Mary Fitz-Gibbon/Derek Brindisi/Kayce Warren

BERNARDSTON
Stanley Garland

BUCKLAND
Rob Riggan

CHARLEMONTE
Vaughn Tower/Toby Gould

COLRAIN
Kevin Fox

CONWAY
John O’Rourke

DEERFIELD
Carolyn Shores Ness

ERVING
Tom Sharp/William Bembury

GILL
Randy Crotcher/John Ward

GREENFIELD
William Martin

HAWLEY
Philip Keenan

HEATH
William Lattrel

LEVERETT
Gordon Fretwell

LEYDEN
Michele Giarusso

MONROE
Carla Davis-Little/David Nash

MONTAGUE
Christopher Boutwell

NEW SALEM
Cathy Jones/Wayne Hackey

NORTHFIELD
Brian Noble

ORANGE
George Willard/David Ames

ROWE
Marilyn Wilson

SHELNBURNE
Ellen McKay

SHUTESBURY
Tom Fydenkevez

WARWICK
Dawn Magi

WENDELL
Daniel Keller

WHATELY
Lynn Sibley

REG. ELECTED
John Paciorek

REG. ELECTED
Bill Perlman

PLANNING BOARD REP.
Sam Lovejoy

2015 FRCOG STAFF

Katherine Allen
Partnership for Youth Coordinator

Jessica Atwood
Economic Development Program Manager

Patricia Auchard
Director of Finance

Glen Ayers
Regional Health Agent

Doris Bittenbender
Town Accountant Assistant

Rebekah Boyd
Administrative Services Coordinator

Chris Brothers
FCCIP Online Permit Administrator

Raine Brown
Homeland Security Program Manager

Jackie Cashin
Town Accountant

James Cerone
Building Inspector

Mary Chicoine Praus
Land Use Planner

Ryan Clary
Senior GIS Specialist

Brenda Codella
Administrative Services Assistant

Randy Crochter
Food Safety Agent

Robert Dean
Director of Regional Services

Amanda Doster
Coalition Technical Assistance Coordinator

Linda Dunlavy
Executive Director

Ray Ellsworth
Town Accountant

Bill Erman
Electrical Inspector

Andrew French
Plumbing & Gas Inspector

Beth Giannini
Senior Transportation Planner II

Linda Gross
Assistant Finance Director

Ted Harvey
Regional Project Planner

James Hawkins
Building Commissioner

Gretchen Johnson
Planning Grant Admin/HLS Program Assist.

Alyssa Larose
Land Use Planner

Paul Lemelin
Zoning & Software Support Assistant

Greg Lewis
Public Health Emergency Preparedness Planner

Mark Maloni
Senior Public Health Emergency Planner

Thomas McDonald
Electrical Inspector

Jessica McMillin
Public Health and Transportation Planner

Moon Morgan
Accountant

Brian Morton
Town Accounting Program Manager

Joyce Muka
Town Accounting Program Manager

Maureen Mullaney
Transportation & GIS Program Manager II

Dan Nietsche
Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

Kimberly Noake MacPhee
Land Use & Natural Resources Program Manager

Robert Quinn-O’Connor
Citizen Corps Coordinator

Megan Rhodes
Senior Transportation & Land Use Planner

Tracy Rogers
Regional Preparedness Program Manager

Laurie Scarbrough
Transportation Planning Engineer

Peggy Sloan
Director of Planning & Development

Patricia Smith
Senior Land Use Planner

Rachel Stoler
Community Health Program Manager

Cathryn Thomas
Town Accountant Assistant

Jeanette Voas
Partnership for Youth Evaluation Coordinator

Phoebe Walker
Director of Community Services

Melissa Ward
Prevention Strategies Coordinator

Lisa White
Regional Public Health Nurse

Andrea Woods
Chief Procurement Officer
The FRCOG is a governmental body that serves and assists the municipalities of Franklin County as effectively and efficiently as possible. We provide regional services to our member towns using a diversity of funding sources and strategies. Over the course of the year we also provide specific services to every town. In 2015, the FRCOG provided the following individualized services to your town:

**ADMINISTRATION AND SPECIAL PROJECTS**

- Individual members of several town energy committees met together informally on a bi-monthly basis to share news from their respective towns and to learn from each other and from invited guests about energy-related topics of mutual interest. FRCOG staff provided assistance in facilitating meetings, presented information, and conducted follow-up communication.
- Groundwork began in late 2015 for a new project developing and implementing financial best practices for the Town under the State Community Compact Program.
- FRCOG grant funds paid for the services of a consulting design firm to complete an expansion feasibility study for the Shelburne Senior Center. The consultant worked with Senior Center staff and local officials to determine space needs and to assess the suitability of several potential sites to meet those needs. The final report was issued and presented to local officials as the basis for further exploration and decision-making.
- Working with the Town and the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI), staff helped move the cable expansion project forward. Staff helped organize and facilitate meetings of partial cable towns and MBI; assisted with review and update of cable strand maps; represented the 11 partial cable towns at a meeting of providers; sat on the MBI provider proposal review committee; and advocated as needed with legislators and the Baker Administration.
- Local officials attended MBI Broadband Expansion informational meetings in April held at the Ashfield Town Hall and Swift River School, which were co-coordinated by the FRCOG.
- Town staff participated in preliminary discussions for a new multi-town project to share professional human resource services. Grant funds will be used in 2016 to move the project forward.

**COOPERATIVE BIDDING & PURCHASING PROGRAM**

- Buckland participated in the cooperative bids for #2 Fuel and Diesel fuel.
- The Town contracted with the FRCOG to receive cooperative bid pricing for up to 24 different Highway Products and Services. Total estimated highway contracts in FY16 is $451,338.
- Buckland continued to be involved in the Elevator Maintenance contract.
- Buckland/Shelburne Elementary School is part of the cooperative contract for Fire Alarm Testing.
- Staff renewed contracts for Rental Equipment and Fire Hose and Testing Services.

**COOPERATIVE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE HEALTH DISTRICT**

- Staff conducted 24 Title-5 (septic system) related activities including conducting soil evaluations and system plan reviews, issuing local permits, completing final inspections or re-inspections of system installations, and preparing Certificates of Compliance.
- Town residents received 13 free tick tests in 2015 through a district grant, a savings of $650. Seventy percent (70%) of ticks tested in Buckland carried the Lyme pathogen. Staff provided tick prevention materials and helped residents access grant funded tick testing through the on-line system.
- The district received a new FDA Food Safety Grant that will improve food inspection and data collection, and offer training to town residents and employees.
- Staff conducted 3 summer recreational camp inspections and 2 pool inspections/re-inspections.
- Staff assisted with implementation of a digital on-line permitting system and issued all annual and other BOH permits.
- Staff conducted 5 housing inspections following up on housing complaints, or assisted residents with rental voucher inspections required for subsidized housing in the Town.
- Staff worked with the BOH on 12 retail food inspections or re-inspections and continued to assist Buckland businesses and residents with compliance of the Food Code.
- At the request of the Board of Health, staff worked with the District Attorney’s office to open a Drug Take Back box at the Buckland Police Department.
- Staff provided technical assistance to the Board of Health with the implementation of their local septic and private well regulations, including assisting homeowners in testing their well water at the time of property transfer. The Health Agent assisted in the permitting of 1 new drilled well.
- At the Shelburne Senior Center, staff held 12 monthly walk-in wellness clinics where the nurse made 96 visits with 34 individual clients.
- At regularly scheduled clinics and wellness events, staff provided town residents with reference materials and health self-management supplies such as medication schedules, pill sorters, personal health records and Files of Life provided by grants from Baystate Franklin Medical Center and Franklin County Home Care Corp.
- Staff provided medication and chronic disease self-management services throughout the year, holding regular hours for all district residents at four community sites. The nurse is also available for home visits for those who need this service.
- Staff made 1 home visit to provide flu vaccine to a home-bound Buckland resident.
• Staff offered mercury thermometer collection and exchange, and sharps disposal and container exchange, in collaboration with the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District. Special portable sharps boxes were distributed to Highway Departments, Police, Fire, and EMS: 53 sharps containers and 12 thermometers were exchanged.

• Staff completed all state-mandated infectious disease investigation, reporting and case monitoring. Follow-up was provided as needed for 12 Buckland and 126 regional reported incidents of communicable illness.

• Staff assisted town officials from Buckland, Shelburne, Ashfield and Colrain in implementing a community Flu Clinic/Emergency Dispensing Sites drill coordinating vaccine, documentation, medical volunteers, and supplies. A total of 97 area residents were served with the help of GCC nursing students and community volunteers.

• Staff provided vaccine and supplies for Shelburne Senior Center Flu Clinics serving 75 area residents.

• Staff attended 9 regular Board of Health (BOH) meetings.

FRANKLIN COUNTY COOPERATIVE INSPECTION PROGRAM

• Staff issued 133 building permits, 82 electrical permits and 46 plumbing/gas permits for Buckland in 2015. Twenty (20) Certificates of Inspection were issued.

PARTNERSHIP FOR YOUTH

• Staff conducted a Teen Health Survey to assess teen attitudes and behavior among middle and high school students. Staff reported to Mohawk Trail Regional School administrators on results from 172 Mohawk students, representing 72% of the 8th, 10th, and 12th grade classes. Survey data meets federal No Child Left Behind requirements for the school, enables the school to receive Safe and Drug Free Schools funding, and is valuable for grant-writing and program planning.

• One staff member from Mohawk Trail Regional High School/Middle School was trained to deliver the LifeSkills program and is currently incorporating the program into the school curriculum.

• Staff coordinated and conducted Alcohol Purchase Surveys of all open package stores in Buckland on 3 occasions. These surveys, proven to reduce alcohol use among youth, involve sending young-looking of-age undercover shoppers to check the stores’ compliance with underage drinking laws. Over the course of 2015 100% of sellers checked for identification.

• Staff also worked with the Buckland Police Department to complete 1 round of alcohol compliance checks at all open licensed establishments, a strategy proven to be effective at reducing youth substance abuse. One hundred percent (100%) of establishments were in compliance.

• Employees of on-premise alcohol licensed establishments were invited to participate in the Training for Intervention ProcedureS (TIPS® Training) for servers, while employees of off-premise alcohol licensed establishments were invited to participate in the Mass Package Store Association (MassPack) Beverage Alcohol Training. Both trainings were offered at a discount to Buckland establishments. Three (3) employees from Buckland establishments participated in the MassPack training.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

• Staff created the 2015 CEDS Plan, which included project proposals submitted by the Greater Shelburne Falls Area Business Association to conduct a Shelburne Falls Market Analysis and to conduct a Creative Economy survey.

• Staff completed a data request for the Mohawk Trail Regional School District.

• Staff worked with the Franklin Land Trust and willing land owners to permanently protect land in prominent viewsheds along the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway and Route 112 Scenic Byway with funding that was received through the National Scenic Byway Program.

• Staff completed a Western Massachusetts Scenic Byway Marketing campaign that included the placement of advertising throughout the target area, launching of a website, and installation of a wayfinding sign system.

• Staff coordinated the development of an Energy Efficiency Marketing Program for 4 communities, including Buckland, that is focused on increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy which is sponsored by the MA Clean Energy Center.

• Staff provided assistance and information about adopting a complete streets policy.

• Staff completed a Plan for the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership Project for 11 West County towns, including Buckland, with specific recommendations and projects to support Natural Resource Based Economic Development, Forest Conservation & Municipal Financial Sustainability.

• Staff continued to discuss with stakeholders efforts to establish a sidewalk, or a buffered shoulder, from the Mohawk Trail Regional School to North Street.

• Staff created an Alternative Transportation Map for Shelburne Falls, which was mailed to households in downtown Buckland and Shelburne.

• Staff coordinated with Town staff to include the reconstruction of Conway Street, South Street, and Conway Road in the appendix of the Franklin County Transportation Improvement Program.

• Staff completed a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality analysis for the Construction of Bicycle Shoulders on Route 112.
REGIONAL PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM
- Staff conducted a review of the Mohawk Emergency Dispensing Site Plan and ran quarterly contact drills and a site notification drill to test the Plan.
- The fire chief/emergency management director and a member of the Selectboard attended REPC meetings.
- Staff conducted initial meetings with the Buckland Board of Selectmen, Buckland EMD, Mohawk Regional School Superintendent, and the Mohawk Regional School District School Committee in regard to the WRHSAC Regional Sheltering Project that has identified Mohawk Regional School as a potential regional shelter for Franklin County.
- With a state Community Innovation Challenge Grant, the FRCOG provided the Buckland and Shelburne Falls Fire Districts with Mobile Data Terminals to improve data collection during fire responses.
- A member of Buckland’s emergency management team served on the Multi-Agency Coordination Center Working Group.

TOWN ACCOUNTING PROGRAM
- Staff produced biweekly vendor warrants, and provided monthly budget reports to all officials and department heads.
- At year end, Staff completed Free Cash certification, and Schedule A was submitted. In addition, Staff provided assistance in completing the Recap for tax rate submission.
- Customized reports for committees and departments were developed and distributed.
- Staff assisted with the annual audit.
- All accounting data was accessible over a secure internet connection to a server at the FRCOG office. Backups were completed daily and there was no unscheduled down time.
- Staff worked with a grant-funded consultant toward creation of operating policies and procedures for the Town Accounting Program. Written policies and procedures will assist with training new staff and will be a resource for existing staff to meet our goal of operating as efficiently as possible to keep program costs as low as possible.

WORKSHOPS & TRAINING
The following list represents the FRCOG workshops and training sessions Buckland public officials, staff, and residents attended and the number in attendance:

Cooperative Public Health Service
- Annual Dinner/Training Meeting — 7

Emergency Preparedness
- Citizen Corps All Members Meeting Series — 4

Partnership for Youth
- Community Use Policies and Agreements Training - 1

Planning, Conservation, and Development
- Gas pipeline Workshop — 1

Selectboard Essentials
- You are the Boss: Personnel Legal Guidance for SB’s — 1
- Big Ticket Projects: From Concept to Town Meeting Approval — 1
- Municipal Finance and Budgets — 2
- Minimum Contribution to Your school — 5
- Rural Funding Sources — 1

Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council
- Emerging Trends for First Responders — 1
- Anti Terror Exercise Series — 1
- Crime Scene Preservation for First Responders — 1