2016 MMA ANNUAL MEETING

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR SMALL TOWNS

Presented by the Small Town Administrators of Massachusetts
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR SMALL TOWNS

Moderator:
Rep. Stephen Kulik, 1st Franklin District

Presenters:
Jessica Atwood, Economic Development Program Manager for the Franklin Regional Council of Governments
Amy Shapiro, Business Development Director for the Franklin County Community Development Corporation
In the Commonwealth, 172 cities and towns have less than 10,000 people.

- 49% of the state’s cities & towns
- 11% of the state’s population
- 52% of the state’s total land area

Map of Towns with less than 10,000 population

Photo: Town of Essex, MA website
WHAT IS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

Today, we are focusing on:

- Creating a business base that serves residents and visitors.
- Offers employment opportunities.
- Contributes to the tax base.
- Keeps money in the community.
- Supports the culture and character of the community.

Skills Training & Workforce Development

Infrastructure Investment

Business Technical Assistance

Industry Cluster Development

Business Attraction

Need-Based Strategy

Entrepreneurship

Marketing

Access to Capital & Financing

Asset-Based Strategy

Tax Incentives

Real Estate Development
OVERARCHING THEMES

- Community Vision
- Understanding Assets
- Identifying Resources
- Partnerships & Collaboration

Photo: Village Center, Sunderland

Photo: Avery Store, Charlemont

Photo: Orange Innovation Center, Orange
What is your community’s vision?

What are you proud of?

What do visitors say about your community?
# Community Assets

What are your community’s assets?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local champions/ community drivers</th>
<th>Farms</th>
<th>Popular attractions</th>
<th>Historic character</th>
<th>Waterfront</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scenic landscape</td>
<td>Transportation access</td>
<td>Proximity to prominent institution/employer</td>
<td>Downtown infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
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## SWOT Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
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# Community Assets

**Example: Town of Ashfield**

<table>
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<th>Strengths</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashfield Lake</td>
<td>Limited broadband</td>
<td>Creative economy</td>
<td>Outside employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theater companies</td>
<td>Low population density</td>
<td>Broadband investment</td>
<td>Remote location</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sense of community</td>
<td>Aging population</td>
<td>Town anniversary</td>
<td>Potential for flooding</td>
</tr>
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Photos: Elmers Store, Double Edge Theater Farm and Performance of Shahrazad, Ashfield 250th Parade
What is happening in your town and the region that you can build upon?

Example: Outdoor Recreation along the Deerfield River
In 2011, three outdoor adventure businesses in the Town of Charlemont (pop. 1,200) were contacted and asked how many visits they have in a year.

Approximately, 120,000-140,000 visits annually
IDENTIFY TRENDS & COLLECT DATA

What is happening in your town and the region that you can build upon?

Example: Outdoor Recreation along the Deerfield River

Turning the corner
Charlemont seeing hopeful economic growth

From Cold River Package Store to Cold River Market & Café

Photos: The Recorder, Cold River Package
What is happening in your town and the region that you can build upon?

Example: 100th Anniversary of the Designation of the Mohawk Trail

- Local business groups from Athol to Williamstown worked together to launch a celebration.
- $19.14 promotions
- Community created scarecrows and businesses displayed them over the weekend of Oct. 17-19, 2014
AS A LOCAL OFFICIAL, WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Identify infrastructure needs and start planning for it
  - Enhance downtown? Clean-up the old mill? Water or wastewater system improvements?

- Encourage a business friendly atmosphere
  - If someone wanting to open a business walks into Town Hall... what happens?
  - Is there business development info on the town website?

- Support the business community
  - Let the businesses know you shop locally.
  - Encourage the creation of a business association or the joining of nearby association.
  - Invite business development groups into the community.
Example: Northfield Area Tourism & Business Association (NATABA)

- An emerging business association wanted to let businesses and entrepreneurs know why they should consider the greater Northfield area.
WHO CAN HELP?

- Don’t have to do this alone.
- Identify resources.
- Clarify the issue.
- Collaboration is key.

Example: RPA help through the State’s District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA)

The Charlemont Planning Board asked FRCOG to help draft an updated Economic Development Chapter for their Master Plan.
PARTNERS & RESOURCES

For your municipality
- MA DHCD
- MOBD
- MassDevelopment
- MA Cultural Council
- USDA Rural Development
- Regional Planning Agency
- Local legislators
- Neighboring Towns
- Major institutions
- And more....

For your business community
- Community Development Corporation
- Business Association
- Chamber of Commerce
- Regional Tourism Council
- Regional Workforce Employment Board & Career Center
- Major employers
- Colleges & Universities
- Municipality
- And more....
PARTNERS & RESOURCES

➢ For your individual businesses.

▪ Business Association/Chamber of Commerce
▪ Community Development Corporation
▪ Entrepreneur or industry organizations
▪ MA Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
▪ SCORE
▪ Career Center
▪ And more....

Examples:

1. Franklin County CDC
2. Western MA Food Processing Corporation
3. Massachusetts Small Business Development Center Network
4. SCORE Western Massachusetts
PARTNERS & RESOURCES

- The following case studies highlight the different types of partners and resources used to promote economic development in small towns.
A partnership of the Towns of Buckland and Shelburne and the Greater Shelburne Falls Area Business Association.

Started with a small state grant, and has continued for over 15 years due to shared commitment and investment.

Photos: Bridge of Flowers, Bridge Street shops, Iron Bridge Dinner, Movie Poster for The Judge
With CDBG support, the Town of Colrain invited FCCDC.

Artists sought help.

First Crafts of Colrain studio tour held in 2004.
Surveyed residents, business and visitors to find out what they want in their community.

Encourage entrepreneurs to recognize opportunity.

“Focus Town Activities and Events in the Core Area to Support the Local Economy and Existing Businesses”
TURNERS FALLS RIVERCULTURE

- Sponsored by the Town of Montague, local businesses, and a grant from the Adams Art Program of the Mass. Cultural Council.
- Leverages arts & culture and natural assets to promote the downtown.
- Created a lively, creative community that attracts visitors and has inspired new businesses.

Photo: LOOT found & made

Photo: Ave A Storefront Galleries, masslive.com
WHAT IS HAPPENING IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

- How is your community generating economic activity?
- What are your plans to promote business development in your community?
FOR MORE INFORMATION

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