2015 Greater Franklin County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Plan

Mission:
To sustainably cultivate competitive wages and career opportunities.

Vision:
Franklin County will be a region that:
• sustainably leverages its advantages, including its rural character;
• is connected to its neighbors and across the globe;
• welcomes innovation and creativity;
• supports development of a skilled, diverse workforce;
• fosters the cultivation of diverse businesses; and
• encourages competitive, living wages & career opportunities.

To download a PDF copy of the 2015 CEDS Plan, go to http://frcog.org/publication/view/2015-ceds-plan/ or click here

The 2015 CEDS Plan was developed by the FRCOG under the guidance of the CEDS Committee and its partners. Support provided by the U.S. EDA* and FRCOG.

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2015 CEDS Plan: **Franklin County Data Snapshot**

**Key Data Points:**
- Most rural area of the Commonwealth, with 75% of its acreage in forest and open land.
- Stable population level, with projected population decline.
- An older overall workforce now and projected in the future.
- Until 2014, recent decline in total labor force size.
- Consistently lowest average wage per job among all 14 counties.
- Low percent of workers employed in private for-profit sector.
- High percentage of jobs in private sector firms are in manufacturing industry.

**Average Wage per Job**
- $37,230 Franklin County (lowest in state since 1997)
- $60,307 Massachusetts
- $50,012 United States

**Top Five Industry Sectors by Employment***
1. Manufacturing (18.5%) **MA (7.4%) US (9.5%)**
2. Healthcare and Social Assistance (17.8%)
3. Retail Trade (14.8%)
4. Accommodations & Food (9.7%)
5. Education Services (6.3%)

*Note: Data only includes private-sector establishments with at least five employees.

Data Sources: MassGIS; UMass Donahue Institute, Population Projections; US Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey; US Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2013; US County Business Patterns, 2014
2015 CEDS Plan: **Infrastructure & Clusters**

**Infrastructure:**
- Crossroads of I-91 & Route 2.
- Two general aviation airports.
- Freight rail access at East Deerfield Railyard and new passenger rail service in Greenfield.
- *MassBroadband 123* “middle mile” fiber network.
- For “last mile”, only ½ of Franklin County towns have cable broadband, which may not be available throughout the community.
- 10 Franklin County towns have neither a public water or wastewater system in its village center, and 4 towns have only one or the other.
- Six planned industrial parks in the county, but only approx. 7 parcels over 5 acres in size remain available for new development.

**Key Industries & Clusters**
- Creative Economy
- Education & Knowledge Creation, including Independent Schools
- Forest, Farm and Food Production
- Healthcare
- Manufacturing, including Metal Products & Precision Machining; Advanced Materials; Paper & Packaging
- Tourism, including Outdoor/Adventure Recreation
2015 CEDS Plan: Strategies & Action Items

Approach to Economic Development:

- Leverage the area’s intrinsic and emerging assets to create economic opportunity in a manner that is both sustainable and reflects its inherent character; and

- Create the capacity needed to take action through collaboration within and outside of the area.

Strategies are designed to be:

- Highly relevant to the needs and advantages of this region.
- Have a meaningful impact and regional scope.
- Achievable in a five-year timeframe.
- Implemented with workforce development, business organizations, municipalities, and other regional partners.

The following Strategies include select action items and projects. To view all and the entire 2015 CEDS Plan, click here.

Strategy 1.
Respond to market opportunities by ensuring access to basic and sector-specific skills training for adults and youth.

Ensure sustainability and expansion of Middle Skills Manufacturing Initiative by supporting Manufacturing Market Manager/Coach position.

Image: FHREB

Assess and expand credential offerings or re-skilling programs that are sector specific.

Image: GCC
2015 CEDS Plan: Strategies & Action Items

**Strategy 2.**
Build collaborations within the region to enhance capacity and better support economic and business development opportunities.

Engage community and economic development leaders through the CEDS Program and FREDI, the Franklin Regional Economic Development Initiative.

*Image: CEDS Committee meeting, FRCOG*

Coordinate a **summit for business associations and chambers** to build capacity and enhance their ability to support businesses.

**Strategy 3.**
Build collaborations with neighboring regions to better leverage economic development opportunities.

With the closure of Vermont Yankee, a new collaboration with VT and NH regions has formed to look at shared economic challenges and opportunities.

*Image: Tri-State Region Stakeholders meeting, FRCOG*

Participate in **Pioneer Valley-wide** economic development initiatives, and sustain the outcomes of the **Northern Tier Economic Resiliency Project**.
Strategy 4.
Invest in infrastructure that supports business development in appropriate areas that are currently under-utilized.

Support “Last Mile” broadband services & IT intensive facilities.

Expand inventory of usable industrial/commercial space

Continue the successful FRCOG Regional Brownfields Program.

Images: MassBroadband123 fiber, MBI
Image: Former Bendix site, Greenfield
Images: 2012 & 2014 Usher Mill, Erving

Strategy 5.
Increase the amount of functional space available to foster the growth of small business.

Support Downtown Revitalization:
- Downtown market survey tool
- Greenfield parking garage
- Complete Streets assessments

Explore Growth Stage Business Incubator
Strategy 6.
Accelerate business development and sustainability through direct support.

Ensure access to **business technical assistance** and non-traditional financing.

Develop programming on:
- **Business succession** planning
- **Institutional buying** and government contracts

Strategy 7.
Support the ability of individual establishments and the economy to be resilient in case of future economic disruptions.

Support **communication framework** for business and emergency preparedness communities.

Develop programming on:
- **Emergency preparedness** for businesses & organizations, and their employees
2015 CEDS Plan: *Strategies & Action Items*

**Strategy 8.**
Enhance specific industry clusters through increased market understanding and asset development.

**Forest, Farm and Food Production**
- Create business opportunities for local forest products and leverage forest land for economic activity
- Expand use of WMFPC and institutional buying of products
- Create a shared cold storage facility
- Access to small scale poultry processing

**Tourism and Creative Economy**
- Address mill building at river access point in Monroe Bridge
- Promote more visitors by rail
- Conduct a study of performance venues
- Support creative economy networking events

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Image: Amtrak stop in Greenfield
Image: FCCDC Western Mass Food Processing Center (WMFPC)
Image: Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership Project
Image: Bank Building, Greenfield
Image: Mill and rafting at Monroe Bridge
Image: Creative Economy Summit 2015