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

Prepared by

Franklin Regional Council of Governments

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May 28, 2015
Cover Photo: View from Mt. Sugarloaf in South Deerfield.
Photo credit: FRCOG, 2014

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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.

Chapter 1: An Economic Development Roadmap

The purpose of economic development planning is to forward policies, programs, and projects to encourage economic opportunity for all. This 2015 CEDS Plan identifies strategies to be implemented within the next five years in key areas that will achieve this vision for Franklin County’s economy.

The strategies are grouped in three major categories: people, places and businesses. Some strategies build upon existing success stories and planning, while other strategies seek to create new capabilities. The intended outcome of this Plan is to encourage sustainable job growth and create a more resilient regional economy.

The 2015 CEDS Plan was developed by FRCOG staff under the guidance of the CEDS Committee and Economic Development District (EDD) Governing Board with input provided by member municipalities, partnering organizations and the public. Appendix A includes the list of CEDS Committee & EDD Board members. The Plan was developed in accordance with U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) regulations 13 C.F.R. § 303.7 and under guidance issued on January 21, 2015.

The 2015 CEDS Plan will be updated annually for the next four years, so as to describe changes in economic conditions, report on project implementation, and reflect the region’s evolving needs and opportunities for economic prosperity. FRCOG will produce a demographic and economic data report to complement this Plan.
Chapter 2: The Region

The following regional profile provides a general background of the economic development conditions in the Greater Franklin County CEDS Region, which includes the twenty-six municipalities of Franklin County plus the neighboring towns of Amherst, Athol and Phillipston.

Map 1: Greater Franklin County CEDS Region

Source: FRCOG, 2015

Geography

Located in western Massachusetts, greater Franklin County region has a predominantly rural landscape, with over 75% of its acreage in forest and open land\(^1\). The region is known for its scenic rivers and hills, superior Connecticut River valley agricultural soils, and picturesque villages and historic mill towns. These rural communities offer many of the same wonderful attributes found in small towns across New England, such as access to natural and historic amenities and a strong sense of community. These

\(^1\) MassGIS, 2005 Land Use Data Set
communities are also faced with the similar challenges common to rural areas, such as lower wages, limited job opportunities and difficulty accessing infrastructure and services that are available in more urban and suburban environments. Rural communities often have limited capacity and access to resources to move economic development and infrastructure projects forward. Based on these circumstances, two cornerstone approaches for economic development in this CEDS Program are: (1) to 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 (2) to create the capacity needed to take action through collaboration within and outside of the area.

**Cornerstone Approaches to Economic Development**

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

**Transportation & Infrastructure**

The region is easily accessible via two of the state’s primary transportation routes, Interstate-91 and Route 2. Within the region, there are two public use airports, including the Orange Municipal Airport which can accommodate large aircraft. There is an extensive freight rail network which can be accessed at the East Deerfield Railyard. A recent addition to the transportation network is the new Greenfield stop for the Amtrak Vermonter passenger rail service that extends from northern Vermont to New York City and Washington DC. This new stop marks the return of passenger rail service to the county for the first time in over twenty-five years.

A comprehensive review of the region’s transportation network and plans for the future will be included in the 2015 Franklin County Long-Range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which is produced by FRCOG's Transportation Planning Program\(^2\). The RTP describes the road, bridge, rail, airport, bicycle & pedestrian and transit systems, and also reviews proposed projects and recommendations to improve the way people and goods move around the region.

\(^2\) [http://frcog.org/program-services/transportation-planning/](http://frcog.org/program-services/transportation-planning/)
Another critical infrastructure needed for an economy to become high performing is access to a reliable, redundant and affordable broadband network. For many areas of the CEDS Region, access to broadband services is currently inadequate for present day needs. Of the 29 municipalities in the CEDS Region, only 16 have access to a cable TV broadband system, which is the most common technology for accessing broadband services. Of the 13 towns in Franklin County without cable systems, nine towns have DSL available within a finite area, and four towns have no access to DSL or cable modem broadband. The Town of Warwick, which does not have DSL or cable access, constructed its own wireless broadband network for residents in 2008. The Town of Leverett is constructing its own community fiber-to-the-home network, which is anticipated to fully operational by the end of 2015.

**Map 2: 44 Towns Unserved by Broadband in MassBroadband123 area**

Efforts at the state and local level are underway to address this lack of broadband access for residents and businesses, often referred to as the “last mile”. This work is building off of MassBroadband 123, a “middle mile” fiber network completed in 2014 using over $90 million of state and federal funds that connects 120 cities/towns in western and north-central Massachusetts to the global telecom network. The state has committed $40 million to invest in last mile infrastructure in unserved communities. Many of these communities are exploring fiber-to-the-premise (FTTP) last mile networks.

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3 For more information about MassBroadband123, go to [http://broadband.masstech.org/](http://broadband.masstech.org/).
either through a cooperative of municipal light plants (MLPs) called Wired West or on their own. Given the cost of FTTP networks, a local contribution would be required to fund the creation of these systems.

In village centers and downtowns, public water systems and/or public wastewater/sewer systems are critical for residential and business development and to protect human health and the environment. Fifteen of the 29 CEDS Region municipalities have centralized wastewater disposal for village and town center areas within their community. This leaves many residents and businesses relying on on-site wastewater disposal. Similarly, only 17 of the 29 CEDS Region municipalities have public water systems in select areas. Public water suppliers as well as private homes throughout the region rely on the availability of clean ground water or surface water for drinking. The United States Geological Survey made an assessment of aquifer potential in the region and found a limited number of aquifers capable of producing moderate to very large quantities of water in many of the communities.

Demographics
The U.S. Census Bureau estimated that Franklin County had a population of 71,221 in 2013 in its 724 sq. miles, while the CEDS Region was estimated to have a total population of 123,880 in its 810 sq. miles. To put this in perspective to its southern neighbors, Franklin County has almost the same population as Amherst, Hadley and Northampton combined and in a land area that is over eight times the size. The overall population change in recent years has been relatively stable with some years showing a decrease in total population.

Figure 1: Total Population and Population Projections

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census Program; UMass Donahue Institute, Population Projections
Adjusted population projections created by the University of Massachusetts’ Donahue Institute (UMDI) and released in 2015, forecast that Franklin County’s total population will decline by 1% or a loss of over 800 people over the next twenty-five years. These projections are created using past county trends and general demographic patterns, and do not take into consideration specific projects in individual communities that could influence population growth. As a result, these projections indicate what could happen to the population level of Franklin County and the CEDS Region, if actions are not taken to create to change this outcome.

A review of how the population is distributed among age groups demonstrates that Franklin County’s population skews much older than the total CEDS Region, state and nation. Since the CEDS Region includes the college-town of Amherst, it has a disproportionately high percentage of residents aged 20-24 years old, in comparison. When considering the population and its relationship to the labor force, Franklin County has a larger proportion of its population in the 45-64 years old age cohort, reflecting an older overall workforce. In fact almost half of the population is 45 years of age or older in Franklin County, while this figure is closer to 40% for the state and nation. As these workers prepare to retire in the coming years, a supply of younger workers is needed to take their place. At the same time, some of the school systems in the more rural areas of the county are challenged by declining school enrollment due to fewer young families staying or moving to the area. Many of these older workers may also represent business owners who are planning to retire and would like to transfer ownership of their business. How this transition happens may have implications to the regional economy.

Figure 2: Population Age Group Distribution

![Population Age Group Distribution](image_url)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009-2013 Five-Year Estimates
Franklin County and the CEDS Region is significantly less racially and ethnically diverse than the state or nation. According to the ACS 2009-2013 Five-Year Estimates, 5.7% of Franklin County and 10.1% of the CEDS Region population identified themselves as being non-white or multi-racial, compared to the 19.5% for the state and 26% for the nation. The percent of residents who identified themselves as of Hispanic or Latino origin ethnicity for Franklin County was 3.3% and the CEDS Region was 4.8%, compared to 9.9% for the state and 16.6% for the nation.

In terms of educational attainment for the population 25 years of age and older, only 8.0% of Franklin County residents and 8.3% of CEDS Region residents do not have a high school or equivalent diploma, compared to 10.6% for the state and 14.0% for the nation. Massachusetts has a high percentage of the population (39.4%) with at least a Bachelor’s or Graduate or professional degree compared to the nation (28.8%). Franklin County (34.0%) and the CEDS Region (36.8%) share this characteristic of a high level of educational attainment for its population age 25 and over.

**Labor Force & Employment**

The labor force is defined as the pool of individuals 16 years of age and over, who are either employed or actively seeking employment. Persons not actively seeking employment, such as enrolled students, retirees or stay-at-home parents, are excluded from the labor force. The unemployment rate describes the percentage of people in the labor force presently not employed, but are actively seeking employment in a given time period. In 2014, the unemployment rate for Franklin County was 5.3% and the CEDS Region was 5.5%, which was lower than state (5.8%) and national (6.2%) rates.

From year to year, the size of the labor force and the total number of employed fluctuates in the county and CEDS Region. Overall, the size of the labor force in Franklin County decreased from 2004 through 2013, as did the number of employed. Decreases in the labor force may be attributed to people moving out of the area or people in the area no longer actively seeking employment, due to the factors mentioned previously like retirement, enrolling in school or becoming stay-at-home parents. Another factor for declines in the labor force are people who have not found employment, become discouraged and are no longer actively pursuing employment.

The particularly low employment levels and decreases in the labor force from 2007 through 2013 is attributed to the economic recession from late 2007 through mid-2009 which was followed by a slow recovery period. By 2014, both the number of people in the labor force and total number of employed increased in Franklin County, nearing 2004 levels. For the CEDS Region, the increase in the labor force during the post-recession recovery period was attributed mostly to increases in Amherst.

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It should be noted that the full scope of the unemployment experienced in the region may not be captured in this data. This data does not distinguish between full- and part-time employment or whether the jobs are benefited. Often increases in the labor force are attributed to recent population growth or changes in labor force characteristics, such as people re-entering the workforce due to economic need. While the overall population level has stayed the same in Franklin County, the age distribution of this population has shifted to be older. As Franklin County has not increased in population size, it is assumed this growth in the labor force is due to more people being of working age and more people re-entering the workforce.

**Figure 3: Franklin County Labor Force and Employment Level**

![Graph of Franklin County Labor Force and Employment Level](image)


**Figure 4: CEDS Region Labor Force & Employment Level**

![Graph of CEDS Region Labor Force & Employment Level](image)

The “class” of worker describes the sector a resident is employed in, such as a private business or non-profit, a governmental entity or is self-employed. Data about unpaid family workers was less 0.1% and is not included in these charts. The percentage of workers employed in private for-profits in the region is much less than compared to the state and nation. Conversely, the percentages of workers employed in private non-profits, government sector or are self-employed are much higher. Factors specific to this region and Massachusetts contribute to why these classes of workers are more prevalent.

Past studies have demonstrated the large role the non-profit sector plays in the state. A 2005 study noted that the Massachusetts non-profit sector was among the largest in the nation, and has a highly skilled workforce. Two of the industries with the greatest number of employees in the region are healthcare & social assistance and education services, which frequently are also private non-profit organizations, such as hospitals, social service agencies, and independent schools.

The government sector includes workers employed at local, state and federal level. At the local level, this includes municipal departments as well as the public school system. At the state level it also includes people employed by the University of Massachusetts in Amherst (UMass). The CEDS Region is greatly influenced by the presence of UMass, which is the largest employer in the region.

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Rural areas in general are recognized as having a higher percentage of self-employed workers either out of necessity (due to not finding employment) or out of opportunity. Access to business assistance and financing is important for helping self-employed people or people who want to be self-employed with launching new ventures. As advances in access to broadband are made and village centers are revitalized, this can encourage more residents to be self-employed or attract self-employed people to locate here.

**Income & Wages**

The income of Franklin County residents is generally close to income estimates for the nation. However, Franklin County incomes and the incomes of other western Massachusetts counties are significantly lower than statewide estimates. While it is recognized that real estate costs and other factors that go into the cost of living are lower in western Massachusetts, there are some costs that are higher here, such as heating and transportation costs. For example, without a robust public transit system in Franklin County, most residents must rely on their own vehicle to access jobs and services, as opposed to other areas of the Commonwealth that have more extensive public transit services. In addition, these residents often must drive longer distances to access jobs and services.

**Figure 6: Median and Per Capita Income Levels**

![Graph showing median household income, median family income, and per capita income for Franklin County, Massachusetts, and the United States.]

Source: U.S. Commerce Department, Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey

While the previous data describes the incomes of people who live in this region, the following data describes the wages paid to people who work at jobs located in the region (regardless of where they may live). Average Wage per Job data is from the

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6 The Determinants of Rural Self-Employment: Insights from County-Level Data, Goetz and Rupasingha NERCRD/Penn State and Atlanta Fed October 2011.
As the title indicates, it is the total amount of annual wages paid in a geographic area divided by the number of jobs in that area. As of 2013, the Average Wage per Job in Franklin County was $37,230, compared to the state’s $60,307 and nation’s $50,012. Franklin County has consistently had a lower average wage per job than both the state and nation, and of all fourteen counties in Massachusetts since 1997. However, it should be noted that the western Massachusetts counties of Berkshire and Hampshire have also been consistently amongst the lowest of all counties in the Commonwealth during this time.

**Figure 7: 2013 Average Wage Per Job for Massachusetts Counties**

Living wage calculators estimate the hourly wage needed to support the monthly expenses of an individual or family. Dr. Amy K. Glasmeier of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has created a county-level living wage calculator. This calculator estimates that for a Franklin County adult to support himself/herself, a living wage would be $11.43 per hour. For a family of two working adults with two children, the calculator estimates a living wage of $15.63 per hour for each adult. For a single parent household with two children, it estimates $28.56 per hour as the living wage to support the family. Other living wage calculators, such as Crittenton Women’s Union, estimate the hourly wage needed for economic independence at the municipal level. For Greenfield, the wage for a single person with no children is $10.31 per hour, for a family of two working adults and two school age children is $13.40 per hour, and for a single-parent household with two school age children is $23.54 per hour. In comparison, the current minimum wage in Massachusetts is $8.00 per hour.

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8 Crittenton Women’s Union, Economic Independence Calculator, [http://www.liveworkthrive.org/site/calculator](http://www.liveworkthrive.org/site/calculator)
**Key Industries & Clusters**

The key industries identified in this Plan are sectors that employ a large number of people, and whose significant job gains or losses could impact the overall economic health of the region. County Business Patterns provides employment data by industry for private-sector firms with five or more employees\(^9\) located in that geographic area. Specifically, this data is describing the private-sector jobs located in Franklin County, regardless of where the employee lives. According to this data set, there were 19,917 employees in Franklin County, an increase of 3% from the year before but still not to pre-recession levels of over 22,000.

**Table 1: Top 5 Private-Sector Industries by Employment, 2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry*</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Massachusetts</th>
<th>United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Employed</td>
<td>% of Total Employed</td>
<td>Average Pay per Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>3,689</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>$49,624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare &amp; Social Assistance</td>
<td>3,538</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>$34,102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>2,946</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>$27,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodations &amp; Food Services</td>
<td>1,934</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>$14,428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Services</td>
<td>1,258</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>$43,270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, County Business Patterns, 2013
*Data source only includes private-sector establishments with five or more employees, and as a result does not include government or self-employed workers.

According to 2013 County Business Patterns, the private-sector industry in Franklin County that employs the largest number of people is the Manufacturing industry, with 3,689 employees or 18.5% of total employment in this data set. This percentage of manufacturing employment is 2.5 times the state rate and almost twice the national rate. While the number employed in manufacturing in 2013 is significantly less than it was ten years ago, there are signs of strength. From 2012 to 2013, the number of those employed in manufacturing increased in both Franklin County and the nation. According to annual payroll figures associated with this data set, the Manufacturing industry has among the highest average pay per employee ($49,624) of the sixteen industries with information available for Franklin County.

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\(^9\) County Business Pattern data excludes public-sector/government and self-employed workers, which are also large components of this region’s economy as seen from the Class of Worker data; [http://www.census.gov/econ/cbp/index.html](http://www.census.gov/econ/cbp/index.html)
The Health Care & Social Assistance industry includes employers, such as hospitals, doctors’ offices, non-profit human services organizations, and elder care facilities. This industry offers a range of job opportunities and pathways to grow within the industry. Trends indicate this industry will continue to grow as the population ages, requiring greater services.

The Retail Trade industry and Food & Accommodations industry are 25% of the total employment in this data set for Franklin County. Theses industries have among the lowest average pay per employee of the sixteen industries with data available. While often not high paying jobs, these industries offer a range of job opportunities, including entry level employment. These industries also play an integral part of the economy and are important to an area’s quality of life and ability to attract new residents and visitors.

Given that this data set does not include government workers, Education Services industry data is only for private-sector institutions, businesses and organizations (i.e. not public schools). A significant part of this industry is the independent schools located in Franklin County. Of these schools, six board approximately 2,000 students annually. In addition to the range of employment options these institutions provide, their presence brings families to visit the area and creates opportunities for institutional buying from local businesses.

Since County Business Pattern data does not include self-employed workers or employees in firms with fewer than five employees, the agricultural industry is not prominent in this data set. However using the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Census of Agriculture, some interesting trends emerge for this industry in Franklin County.
From the 2002 to 2012, the number of farms increased by 33% (from 586 to 780) and the amount of land in farms\textsuperscript{10} increased by 21% (from 74,281 acres to 89,772 acres).

Using this information and comparing it to land use data, it is estimated that about 21% of the land area in Franklin County was in agriculture in 2012\textsuperscript{11}. While there were increases in the number of and land in farms, the average size of farms decreased during this period from 127 acres to 115 acres. While the total number of acres in farms increased during this time, the total acres of cropland in farms decreased. The growth of land in farms was due to increased acreage for pastureland, woodland, and land used for house lots, ponds, roads, etc.

A list of the major employers (see following table) is indicative of the high employment industries found region. For example, Baystate Franklin Medical Center is the anchor of Healthcare & Social Assistance industry in the region. This list of major employers also includes major employers located in the CEDS Region, but not in Franklin County (and as such are not reflected in the County Business Pattern data).

**Table 2: CEDS Region Major Employers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer Name</th>
<th>Primary Location</th>
<th>Range of Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Massachusetts</td>
<td>Amherst</td>
<td>5,000 – 9,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yankee Candle Company, Inc.</td>
<td>Deerfield</td>
<td>1,000 – 4,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amherst College</td>
<td>Amherst</td>
<td>500 – 999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baystate Franklin Medical Center</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>500 – 999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. S. Starrett Company</td>
<td>Athol</td>
<td>500 – 999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pelican Products Inc.</td>
<td>Deerfield</td>
<td>500 – 999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seaman Warehouse</td>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>500 – 999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athol Memorial Hospital</td>
<td>Athol</td>
<td>250 – 499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deerfield Academy</td>
<td>Deerfield</td>
<td>250 – 499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farren Care Center</td>
<td>Montague</td>
<td>250 – 499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenfield Community College</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>250 – 499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampshire College</td>
<td>Amherst</td>
<td>250 – 499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northfield Mt. Hermon School</td>
<td>Gill</td>
<td>250 – 499</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MA Department of Workforce Development, Infogroup 2015

\textsuperscript{10} Land in farms includes cropland, woodland, pastureland/rangeland as well as house lots, ponds, roads.

\textsuperscript{11} This estimate was determined by dividing the total number acres of land in farms according to the 2007 Census of Agriculture (79,465 acres), into the total number of acres (not including water) in Franklin County (425,671 acres).
The EDA encourages economic development strategies that seek to grow specific “clusters” in a region. Clusters are defined by Professor Michael E. Porter of the Harvard Business School’s Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness\textsuperscript{12}, as geographic concentrations of interconnected industries and supportive organizations that make regions uniquely competitive for jobs and private investment. A cluster may include businesses from different industry sectors. For example the “Agribusiness, Food Processing & Technology” cluster includes farms, food manufacturers as well as retail trade and service operations that specifically serve this cluster. This cluster economic development strategy is intended to be region-driven with each region leveraging its own unique competitive advantages. The premise is that a successful cluster will generate job growth and economic activity in the region where it is implemented, while also contributing to a stronger, more diversified national economy.

The EDA has funded two online tools to provide region’s with data to help them improve their economic competitiveness by understanding their clusters in relation to nation. As found on StatsAmerica.org, the Industry Clusters\textsuperscript{13} browser provides employment, establishment and wage data on a per county basis for 17 defined clusters (including six manufacturing sub-clusters). In addition to total figures, it also provides the location quotient of a cluster, which demonstrates the concentration of employment in that cluster in comparison to the national average. For example, an LQ of over 1.0 indicates a higher than national average concentration in a specific cluster. A high employment concentration in a particular cluster can attract new businesses to the area that want to find skilled labor in that field or may encourage a new start up to fill a niche within that cluster.

The clusters that had the highest employment location quotient were mostly manufacturing related. The clusters identified were not necessarily the largest employers, but have a high concentration of employment in that cluster in comparison to the national average.

\textsuperscript{12} For more information: \url{www.isc.hbs.edu/economicdevelopment.htm}
\textsuperscript{13} Innovation in America Regions project, by the Purdue Center for Regional Development at Indiana University. \url{http://www.statsamerica.org/innovation/data.html}
Table 3: Clusters with Highest Employment Location Quotient

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chemicals &amp; Chemical Based Products</td>
<td>2.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinery Manufacturing</td>
<td>2.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education &amp; Knowledge Creation</td>
<td>1.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest &amp; Wood Products</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Materials</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Metal Manufacturing</td>
<td>1.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agribusiness, Food Processing &amp; Technology</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Another EDA funded online tool, called the U.S. Cluster Mapping Project\(^ {14} \), has created 67 definitions for “traded” (serves markets outside of the region) and “local” (primarily only serves the local market) clusters, and measures their strength in comparison to other areas across the country. This data tool has identified 15 traded clusters in Franklin County that they have evaluated to be strong due to high employment specialization in comparison to other counties. Again these are not clusters with the greatest number of employees, but are clusters that have been evaluated to be strong according to their criteria. See Figure 9 for a graphic of the Franklin County traded clusters identified as strong.

It should be noted that the title of some of the clusters may not effectively describe how this cluster is relevant to Franklin County. For example, the Recreational & Small Electric Goods cluster includes: recreational and decorative goods, games, toys, and children’s vehicles, motorcycles and bicycles, sporting and athletic goods, office supplies, and electric housewares. As a result, this cluster includes local arts and craft businesses as well as outdoor recreation oriented retail businesses.

\(^ {14} \) U.S. Cluster Mapping Project: [www.clustermapping.us](http://www.clustermapping.us)
Figure 9: Strong Traded Clusters in Franklin County


These online tools provide a useful perspective on the clusters found in this region and how they compare to other regions or the nation. Each of these online tools defines clusters differently, and in some ways differently than how the CEDS Region may have defined them. For example, the Agribusiness & Food Processing cluster (as was defined in the StatsAmerica.org Industry Clusters browser) has been functioning in the region for many years and is recognized for its continued growth potential. The data provided by the online tools bolsters this local understanding by identifying it with a high location quotient and evaluating it as a “strong” cluster. Conversely, a cluster that is recognized in the Franklin County region, but not defined in these online tools, is the adventure & outdoor recreation cluster. As a result, the information provided by these online tools offers useful information and a data-driven perspective, but do not exclusively determine the clusters to be the focus of CEDS Plan strategies.
Chapter 4 of the 2015 CEDS Plan identifies strategies and action items to improve the regional economy. Most of these strategies are applicable to a broad range of industries and clusters found in this region. However, special attention is also made to key industries and clusters that have unique assets or advantages in this region, have the potential to create job opportunities, and are in keeping with the vision of the 2015 CEDS Plan. Information from federal data sources and online cluster tools was combined with local knowledge to identify six of these key industries and clusters for special attention. As this CEDS Plan is updated, this list may evolve to reflect new opportunities and changes in market conditions.

Table 4: CEDS Plan Key Industries & Clusters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Industries &amp; Clusters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creative Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education &amp; Knowledge Creation – Independent Boarding Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest, Farm and Food Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing – Metal Products/Precision Machining; Advanced Materials; Paper &amp; Packaging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism – Outdoor/Adventure Recreation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FRCOG, 2015

Economic Resilience
The EDA describes economic resilience in terms of economic development and includes: the ability to recover quickly from a shock, the ability to withstand a shock, and the ability to avoid the shock altogether.\(^{15}\) As stated by the EDA, a region’s economic prosperity is linked to its ability be economically resilient.

Fortunately, there is an active and robust emergency preparedness community operating in the region, led by the Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council (WRHSAC). The WRHSAC has implemented an impressive range of projects and initiatives for planning and preparedness for emergencies and to support first responders and emergency personnel. This work has required tremendous outreach and the creation of informational materials, including the WesternMassReady.org website. Currently, efforts are underway to better engage the business community to be prepared and participate in this system of emergency management (see Goal 7).

Considerable work has been done to assess and mitigate hazard risks at the municipal and regional level, such as through town hazard mitigation plans and the work of WRHSAC and FRCOG’s Emergency Preparedness Program. Possible disasters that

could impact this area include flooding, severe winter weather, extreme heat, power outages, terrorism, earthquakes, emerging disease and pandemics, hazardous materials, forest fires, and tornadoes and high winds.\textsuperscript{16} Experience from the devastating flooding of Tropical Storm Irene in 2011 provided additional insight into what could be done to improve response and recovery. As a result of this work, action steps and resources have been prepared to effectively protect the health and safety of residents, emergency personnel and others in case of any of these events.

Using the lens of economic development, particular attention is being paid to risks that could harm the broader economy or specific clusters. Two specific projects have been identified: a shared cold storage facility for food and addressing the condition of the former Ramage Paper facility in Monroe (see Strategy 8).

Presently, there is no shared cold storage facility in the region. If such a facility was constructed it could be used by farmers, food producers, users of the Western Mass. Food Processing Center, and emergency food organizations. In case of a predictable weather event (such as an approaching hurricane that could cause severe flooding and high winds), such a facility could be used by farmers to harvest and store their produce in advance of a storm.

The former Ramage Paper mill in Monroe is located on the banks of the Deerfield River at the Monroe Bridge dam (which has scheduled releases to create whitewater conditions for kayaking and rafting) and across from the premier river access platform. The wood portion of the mill is in a state of significant disrepair. If there were another severe flooding or winter weather event, it could further degrade the condition of the building. If this portion of the building is not addressed, it could impact the quality of and access to the Deerfield River for outdoor recreation.

In addition to specific risks, the EDA recommends economic development planners evaluate their region’s resilience by measuring how evenly income is distributed across the population and the degree to which economic activity is spread across sectors. The premise is that a diversified economy will better withstand economic shocks.

The University of California Berkeley’s Institute of Governmental Studies has an online tool called the Resilience Capacity Index (RCI) which summarizes a region’s status based on multiple factors that “influence the ability of a region to bounce back from a future unknown stress.”\textsuperscript{17} This Index takes into consideration how a region’s income is distributed and the diversity of economic activity, among other factors. The Index score indicates how well a metropolitan area might respond to a future stress. A ranking of

\textsuperscript{16} Possible Disasters in MA. www.WesternMassReady.org.
\textsuperscript{17} http://brr.berkeley.edu, The University of California Berkeley’s Institute of Governmental Studies – Building Resilient Regions.
VERY HIGH or HIGH indicates a higher capacity of being resilient, and that “the region has factors and conditions thought to position a region well for effective post-stress resilience performance”, according to the Building Resilient Regions website. Whereas a ranking of VERY LOW or LOW indicates “the region lacks factors and conditions thought to position a region well for effective post-stress resilience performance.”

For the metropolitan Springfield, MA area (which includes Franklin County and Amherst of the CEDS Region), the risk is MEDIUM and is ranked 152 out of 361 metropolitan areas across the country\(^\text{18}\). The Springfield metropolitan area is surrounded to the east, west and south by regions evaluated to have an RCI as HIGH or VERY HIGH. For the metropolitan Springfield, MA area, the factors that contributed to a lower score related to regional affordability, business environment, educational attainment, poverty, homeownership, and voter participation. Each of these factors has specific data points that go into a score. For example, the “business environment” factor includes information about the number of small businesses and small business start-ups, broadband access, and venture capital.

**Map 3: Resilience Capacity Index (RCI) Map of Metropolitan Regions**

![Resilience Capacity Index (RCI) Map of Metropolitan Regions](source)

Source: The University of California Berkeley’s Institute of Governmental Studies – Building Resilient Regions. [http://brr.berkeley.edu](http://brr.berkeley.edu), April 2015.

\(^{18}\) The RCI rankings of the 351 metropolitan areas in the country range from 1 for Very High to 351 for Very Low.
Chapter 3: SWOT Analysis

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis, evaluates advantageous and disadvantageous factors that come from within or from outside the region and that can influence economic development in the region. The following SWOT analysis was compiled by using a variety of inputs, including a brainstorming session of the CEDS Committee, one-on-one partner interviews with CEDS Program partners, and a review of relevant documents including the 2013 Franklin County Regional Plan for Sustainable Development, which had involved an extensive public participation process.

Table 5: Strengths for Economic and Community Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths (Region’s competitive advantages)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proximity and access to major markets via Interstate 91 and Route 2, and freight and passenger rail network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic rural landscape and abundant natural resources, including farmland and forestland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of outdoor recreation assets and attractions, including unique resources such as the scheduled releases of water by dams along the Deerfield River to create whitewater conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High educational attainment level for the population 25 years and over, and access to respected higher education institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful skills training programs established for manufacturing, healthcare, and renewable energy industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to entrepreneurial and small business development assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active and engaged agricultural and food system community, including access to the Western Mass. Food Processing Center in Greenfield and to PV Grows (a network of individuals and entities supporting this cluster)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong interest in “buy local” efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic and cultural attractions, and acclaimed arts and culture community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth in highly skilled manufacturing employment opportunities in the region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local governments and regional organizations’ ability to work collaboratively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong clusters in plastics manufacturing and advanced materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of independent schools and colleges in the area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robust and integrated emergency preparedness and first responder community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6: Weaknesses for Economic and Community Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weaknesses (Region’s relative competitive disadvantages)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Recent population trends factor into projections that predict a decline in the population in the near future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Older overall population, resulting in a large segment of the workforce and of business owners approaching retirement age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Need for more job opportunities and job opportunities that pay a competitive, living wage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Many areas without broadband availability, which greatly restricts access to economic, educational and civic engagement opportunities and impacts real estate values and the ability to attract and retain residents and businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Low inventory of developable industrial land in center of region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ High transportation costs and limited access to public transit services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ High cost to redevelop historic downtown structures and historic mill buildings, which cannot be recouped by current real estate rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Village centers with limited or no access to public water and/or sewer systems, which is limiting commercial enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Limited available capacity and resources for municipalities to pursue economic development projects and invest in infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Limited employment opportunities for youth and young adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Availability of affordable, quality child care and early education services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Photo 1: Strathmore Mill, Turners Falls

The high cost to redevelop brownfields sites and vacant mills, given real estate market conditions in the region, is a challenge for property owners.

Photo credit: FRCOG, 2015
## Table 7: Opportunities for Economic and Community Development

**Opportunities** *(Potential positive impacts from outside the region)*

- Access to higher educational institutions
- Availability of former Northfield Campus for redevelopment as an academic institution or similar campus use.
- Connections to industries and resources that broaden business development eco-system, such as Valley Venture Mentors
- Growth of regional networks that are enhancing food systems and the creative economy, such as PV Grows and the PV Creative Economy Network
- MassBroadband 123 fiber network and state funds committed to invest in last mile infrastructure in unserved areas in western Massachusetts
- Interest in enhancing passenger rail services along the Knowledge Corridor/Connecticut River Main Line corridor
- Relative resiliency of small business sector, as demonstrated in the Pioneer Valley Growth Small Business Study
- Strength of non-profit sector and Education & Knowledge Creation cluster in Massachusetts.

## Table 8: Threats for Economic and Community Development

**Threats** *(Potential negative impacts from outside the region)*

- Challenge to attract and retain young professionals and young families
- Limited recognition of Franklin County as a destination for business and tourism, in comparison to other regions
- External ownership of existing major employers or threat of external ownership as business owners retire and their firms are acquired
- Loss of jobs and economic activity due to decommissioning of Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant
- Lack of understanding of manufacturing career opportunities and limited availability of skilled workforce to fill advanced manufacturing jobs
- Challenge to maintain funding for programs, such as career education and school-to-youth programs
- Uncertainty of public funding levels that may impact services, infrastructure investment and high employment in government and non-profit sectors
**Who’s Who? An Acronym Guide**

The following section refers to organizations that are championing CEDS Goals & Objectives, or are invited to participate in a variety of CEDS related activities. The following is a list of acronyms of these organizations. If the organization is from outside of Massachusetts, the home state is indicated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BDCC</td>
<td>Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (VT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRPC</td>
<td>Berkshire Regional Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Community Action of Franklin, Hampshire &amp; North Quabbin Regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDA</td>
<td>United States Economic Development Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDC</td>
<td>Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPA</td>
<td>United States Environmental Protection Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACP</td>
<td>Fostering Arts &amp; Culture Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCCC</td>
<td>Franklin County Chamber of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCCDC</td>
<td>Franklin County Community Development Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCRHRA</td>
<td>Franklin County Regional Housing &amp; Redevelopment Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCTS</td>
<td>Franklin County Technical School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FHCC</td>
<td>Franklin Hampshire Career Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FHREB</td>
<td>Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FREDI</td>
<td>Franklin Regional Economic Development Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRCOG</td>
<td>Franklin Regional Council of Governments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRTA</td>
<td>Franklin Regional Transit Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCC</td>
<td>Greenfield Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFSABA</td>
<td>Greater Shelburne Falls Area Business Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MassDEP</td>
<td>Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MassDOT</td>
<td>Massachusetts Department of Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBA</td>
<td>Montague Business Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBI</td>
<td>Massachusetts Broadband Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLPs</td>
<td>Municipal Light Plants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRPC</td>
<td>Montachusett Regional Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATABA</td>
<td>Northfield Area Tourism And Business Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NQCC</td>
<td>North Quabbin Chamber of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVCEN</td>
<td>Pioneer Valley Creative Economy Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVPC</td>
<td>Pioneer Valley Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWRPC</td>
<td>Southwest Regional Planning Commission (NH)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMDI</td>
<td>University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRC</td>
<td>Windham Regional Commission (VT)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4: Strategies and Action Items

A strategic review of findings of the SWOT analysis was undertaken to identify the major factors that impact economic and community development in the region, and how strategies may be implemented to leverage these advantages and mitigate the disadvantages. While in preliminary draft stage, these strategies were presented to the CEDS Committee, the Franklin Regional Planning Board, and at the March 2015 Franklin County Chamber of Commerce breakfast.

Key elements considered when developing strategies for inclusion in the 2015 CEDS Plan were:

- Strategies must be **highly relevant** to the needs and advantages of this region, and will have a **meaningful impact** on the regional economy.
- Strategies are **achievable** through available or attainable capacity and resources in a five-year time frame.
- **Value is added** to these strategies through inclusion in the 2015 CEDS Plan, due to the potential for direct assistance by partnering entities or eligibility for public economic development programs.

The 2015 CEDS Plan strategies are grouped into three general categories: **PEOPLE, PLACES, and BUSINESS**. Specific action items for each strategy are included with the lead entity and its partners responsible for implementation and the intended outcomes or products that will result from these strategies.

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**PEOPLE, PLACES, BUSINESS**

Strategies are organized into three general categories: PEOPLE, PLACES, or BUSINESS. Many of the strategies identified in this Chapter could apply to more than one of these categories. For example, **the strategy to deploy broadband access in unserved areas**. Access to broadband can help people connect to education and job opportunities; can influence where a business may or may not locate; and can enhance how businesses can efficiently function and access new markets. However, for the purpose of organization, access to broadband is included under PLACES as it is an infrastructure need.
PEOPLE
This category addresses issues of capacity and the ability for individuals and organizations to make the most of existing resources and potential opportunities.

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

As stated in Labor Market Trends in the Pioneer Valley, “to foster strong economic growth in the future, Pioneer Valley should strive to align the education of its labor force to meet the demands of the region’s employers.” Fortunately, workforce development organizations, higher education, and private businesses have demonstrated their ability to be responsive to the needs of prospective employees and employers. Recent programs launched to promote manufacturing and agriculture have been particularly successful in connecting people and industry through skills development. It is important for existing programs to be sustained and kept up to date to meet demands, and for these organizations and private industry to continue to be responsive by identifying skills gaps and developing new programs to address those gaps.

A. Ensure sustainability and expansion of manufacturing middle-skills training for adults and youth.

- Actions: Continue to build upon the success of the Middle Skills Manufacturing Initiative and launch of the broader-based Foundational Manufacturing program with sustained support by the Franklin-area Manufacturing Outreach Project, which includes the FHREB’s Manufacturing Market Manager/Coach position. The Franklin-area Manufacturing Outreach Project ensures that outreach to manufacturers continues; training needs and curriculum are kept up-to-date; coaching of promising candidates occurs, and new job opportunities are identified and promoted.

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- **Lead and Partners:** FHREB, GCC, FCTS, and regional employers
- **Products/Outcomes:** Increase the number of training graduates and maintain a high success rate for job placement and job retention

**B. Assess and expand credential offerings or re-skilling programs** that are sector specific.
- **Actions:** The GCC Workforce Development Office will assess industry needs and implement programs to provide trainings that are sector specific or customized to specific businesses.
- **Lead and Partners:** GCC, FHREB, FHCC
- **Products/Outcomes:** Creation of new certificate or expanded programing offerings implemented

**C. Explore how the literacy level of the workforce may be improved.**
- **Actions:** Coordinate education and workforce development leaders to develop strategies for how to assist youth and adults with job readiness and improved literacy skills.
- **Lead and Partners:** K-12 public schools, FHREB, The Literacy Project, Community Action of Franklin, Hampshire and North Quabbin Regions
- **Products/Outcomes:** Partner participation to develop strategies.

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

Established intra-regional networks, such as the CEDS Program and the Franklin Regional Economic Development Initiative (FREDI), allow for communities, organizations and individuals to engage on important issues. These collaborations are essential to achieving the goals of the 2015 CEDS Plan. Recent formal and informal collaborations of organizations that support businesses and business growth have experienced successful outcomes through cooperation, as seen with the ongoing work of the Fostering Arts & Culture Partnership in Franklin County and 100th anniversary of the Mohawk Trail designation. However, additional capacity is needed to maintain and broaden these relationships.

- **A. Facilitate and enhance the ability of community and regional leaders to engage in regional economic development networks.**
  - **Actions:** Promote engagement and coordinate meetings of the CEDS Committee and FREDI to further important projects, policies and programs to meet the mission and vision of the 2015 CEDS Plan
• **Lead and Partners**: FRCOG, CEDS Committee members and organizational partners, FREDI members
• **Products/Outcomes**: CEDS meetings coordinated and strong participation; FREDI partners participating as lead implementers

B. Build capacity for **area business associations and chambers of commerce** to efficiently support economic growth in the region.

• **Actions**: A summit will be held for area business associations, chambers of commerce and related organizations that will feature topics to strengthen individual participating organizations as well as establish methods to better communicate and coordinate among them.
• **Lead and Partners**: GSFABA, FCCC, NATABA, NQCC, MBA, Turners Falls RiverCulture, FCCDC, FRCOG
• **Products/Outcomes**: Broad participation by partnering organizations

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

Recognizing that there are limited resources available and that often neighboring regions face similar challenges, it is important to build collaborations that will make the most efficient use of opportunities and promote the goals and perspective of the greater Franklin County region.

A. As a result of the announcement of Vermont Yankee Nuclear Facility’s closure in 2013, a new **Tri-Region collaboration** emerged consisting of regional planning and economic development organizations from Franklin County, MA; Windham County, VT; and Cheshire County, NH. Sponsored by the FRCOG and in support of this collaboration, a UMDI study\(^{20}\) estimated the shared economic impact of this event across the three-county will be significant. The Tri-Region collaboration seeks to help offset pending losses in economic activity in the broader region through coordination and the leveraging of assets.

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- **Actions**: Actively participate in the Tri-Region collaboration to identify its assets and shared challenges, in anticipation of developing a collaborative economic development strategy for the greater region.

- **Lead and Partners**: FRCOG, BDCC, SWRPC, WRC

- **Products/Outcomes**: Creation of a shared Tri-Region strategy for economic development

B. Participate in **Pioneer Valley-wide** economic development initiatives to access opportunities and represent Franklin County perspectives in broader regional initiatives.

- **Actions**: Actively participate in Pioneer Valley-wide economic development initiatives to access opportunities and ensure Franklin County perspectives are included, such as PVPC’s Plan for Progress and the EDC’s Economic Development Partners (EDP) group, Homefield Advantage Committee, and Infrastructure Committee.

- **Lead and Partners**: FRCOG, FCCC, FHREB, GCC, PVPC, EDC

- **Products/Outcomes**: Regular participation

C. Sustain the outcomes of the **Northern Tier Economic Resiliency Project** to ensure a robust and connected business development eco-system in the northern tier that extends from northern Berkshire County to the North Quabbin region.

- **Actions**: Facilitate direct assistance and referrals and access to financing for small businesses and entrepreneurs to resources along the Northern Tier.

- **Lead and Partners**: FCCDC, BRPC, FRCOG, business associations, participating municipalities, and business support-related firms

- **Products/Outcomes**: New businesses and entrepreneurs receiving assistance
PLACES

For Franklin County to prosper economically, businesses need to be able to grow and succeed. It is critical to have places for these businesses to locate and to have the necessary infrastructure available. It is in the best interest of individual companies as well as communities at large, for firms to find the best neighborhood for their business - whether that neighborhood is in an industrial park, a vibrant downtown, or in their own home. Having suitable places for businesses to locate and succeed is important, and may require community support and investment infrastructure.

4. Invest in infrastructure that supports business development in appropriate areas that are currently under-utilized.

As a region seeking to both foster economic development and preserve the natural resources and rural character of this landscape, it is important to make the best use of existing infrastructure and efficiently target investment in new infrastructure to the most appropriate areas.

A. With the completion of the MassBroadband123 network, support investment in broadband infrastructure that deploys access into unserved areas and creates a robust and advanced telecom system in the region.

   i. Support the construction of “last mile” broadband infrastructure in to unserved areas.

      • Actions: With state investment committed for construction and with municipalities exploring the potential for investing in broadband networks, efforts will continue to determine the best approaches and financing mechanisms to deploy last mile infrastructure into unserved areas, which could include fiber-to-the-premise; cable television system expansion; and possibly wireless or hybrid solutions.

      • Lead and Partners: MBI, Municipalities, MLPs, WiredWest, MassBroadband123

MassBroadband123

MassBroadband123 is a 1,200 “middle mile” fiber network completed in 2014 by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI), a division of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative. The network provides a direct fiber connection to over 1,100 community anchor institutions (i.e. schools, town halls, police stations, etc.) in 123 municipalities in western and central Massachusetts. This $90 million project was constructed using state and federal funds and is owned by MBI, and will be an essential link for connecting new “last mile” broadband infrastructure to the global telecom network.
FRCOG, Cable providers, Network builders

- **Products/Outcomes:** Infrastructure investment; Miles of wireline infrastructure deployed

ii. Support the **operation and maintenance of last mile** broadband services, upon construction of network(s).

- **Actions:** As construction is underway, the mechanism to successfully operate and maintain last mile services over this network will need to be established.

- **Lead and Partners:** MBI, Municipalities, MLPs, WiredWest; Cable providers, Internet private service providers

- **Products/Outcomes:** Increase in the number of municipalities with broadband access

iii. Encourage the development of **IT intensive facilities** that will leverage the MassBroadband 123 middle mile fiber network, and attract businesses and institutions to the area for access to this next generation infrastructure.

- **Actions:** Support the creation of projects such as the Greenfield TelNet Project which seeks to pilot a municipally based IT network; expanded services to residents through the Leverett Fiber to the Home Project; and the proposed Interconnection Facility & Data Center at the Greenfield Eco-Industrial Park, which was the focus of a 2011 study funded by the EDA and assessed the project as financially feasible and a potential catalyst for expanding the IT industry in the region.

- **Lead and Partners:** Town of Greenfield, FRCOG, Town of Leverett

- **Products/Outcomes:** Miles of wireline infrastructure deployed in Greenfield; Updated promotional materials for the Interconnection Facility & Data Center, once the Greenfield Eco-Industrial Park is shovel-ready

B. Expand inventory of **usable industrial/commercial space** in areas near existing infrastructure and zoned for those purposes.

i. Assess the amount of developable land in the six planned industrial parks of Franklin County, and inventory large, **underutilized commercial/industrial sites** to assess their potential for redevelopment, so as to assist in the promotion of opportunities to potential developers and identify pre-development needs.

- **Actions:** Update the Industrial Park Inventory to monitor the availability of developable land. Using GIS mapping coverages, local knowledge and the MassDEP Potential Redevelopment Inventory, review large underutilized commercial/industrial sites and assess their status, such
as LP Athol (Athol), Bidwell Property (Athol), Canal District mills (Montague), and Downtown Orange mill properties, and other sites.

- **Lead and Partners:** FRCOG, Participating municipalities, MassDEP, EDC
- **Products/Outcomes:** Complete inventory

ii. Implement the **FRCOG Regional Brownfields Program** to support the assessment and clean-up of sites that may hinder community development (such as through public health concerns or blight) or can support economic development (such as through redevelopment and reuse).

- **Actions:** Administer an EPA Brownfields Assessment grant for sites potentially contaminated by hazardous substances or petroleum products; and support the clean-up and reuse of assessed sites.
- **Lead and Partners:** FRCOG, participating municipalities, EPA, MassDEP
- **Products/Outcomes:** Number of sites and acres of land/square feet of buildings assessed

iii. Develop the proposed **Greenfield Eco-Industrial Park** at the former Bendix/Besley property, owned by the Town of Greenfield.

- **Actions:** Secure funding to clear the site of structures and debris, and construct necessary on-site utilities and infrastructure.
- **Lead and Partners:** Town of Greenfield, FRCOG
- **Products/Outcomes:** Increase in acres of industrial land available

iv. Develop the proposed **Turnpike Road Industrial Park** off of Sandy Lane, owned by the Town of Montague.

- **Actions:** Secure funding to prepare the site and construct necessary on-site utilities and infrastructure
- **Lead and Partners:** Town of Montague, FRCOG
- **Products/Outcomes:** Increase in acres of industrial land available

v. Determine feasibility of the town-owned **Bidwell Property** for industrial/commercial development and enhanced access from Route 2.

- **Actions:** Secure funding to conduct feasibility study and develop cost estimates for site development and enhanced access
- **Lead and Partners:** Town of Athol, MRPC, MassDOT
- **Products/Outcomes:** Completion of feasibility study
C. Explore the issues and opportunities for village centers without public sewer and/or water supply systems to accommodate small scale business development.

- **Actions:** Conduct GIS mapping of village centers to depict the density of these areas, and their relation to existing public sewer or water systems. Areas of a sufficient density and with opportunity for small scale commercial development, but without public water or sewer systems, will be identified, such as the Town of Conway’s Downtown Wastewater Management project. Partnering organizations will coordinate a summit of impacted communities, state officials, and other interested stakeholders to discuss this challenge and what measures could be taken.

- **Lead and Partners:** FRCOG, FCRHRA, CA, Municipalities, MassDEP

- **Products/Outcomes:** Complete infrastructure & density mapping exercise; Partners host an informational event on the topic with communities and state officials.

D. Invest to maintain the existing transportation network and to expand alternative transportation options and related support facilities.

1. Building on the $73 million investment in the CT River Main Line/Knowledge Corridor rail line, continue to work with MassDOT, state and federal legislators, and other regional stakeholders to develop and finance commuter rail between Greenfield and Springfield.

   - **Actions:** Develop and assess cost and ridership projections of commuter rail service; access reserved capital funds in MA Transportation Bond for capital equipment acquisition; advocate for operation funding.

   - **Lead and Partners:** FRCOG, MassDOT, PVPC, Legislators

   - **Products/Outcomes:** Commuter rail service by 2018.

2. Increase, improve and expand transit options in the region.

   - **Actions:** Implement recommendations in FRTA Comprehensive Service Analysis.

   - **Lead and Partners:** FRTA, FRCOG, MassDOT, FTA

   - **Products/Outcomes:** Improved service options by 2016.

3. Build a long-term parking garage in Greenfield to serve rail and transit users and downtown business employees and customers.

   - **Actions:** Continue to support and assist in grant writing and other projects to move Greenfield Parking Garage project forward.

   - **Lead and Partners:** Greenfield, FRCOG

   - **Products/Outcomes:** Downtown parking garage by 2020.
5. Increase the amount of functional space available to foster the growth of small business.

Many small businesses and start-up ventures today are seeking flexible, functional spaces located in areas that are welcoming to emerging businesses and that foster interaction and creativity. This goal seeks to encourage the creation and marketing of such spaces that will attract entrepreneurs and business owners.

A. Building upon the Pioneer Valley Growth Business Study\textsuperscript{21}, assess the feasibility of creating a **growth-stage business incubator** that would meet the needs of growth stage, light industrial businesses moving out of incubator space (such as the FCCDC Venture Center) but not ready to construct their own facilities.

- **Actions**: Determine the number of growth-stage businesses in the region and compare them to the amount of available and suitably sized locations; if a sufficient number of these businesses exist, complete a feasibility study for the creation of a growth-stage incubator.
- **Lead and Partners**: FRCOG, FCCDC, UMDI
- **Products/Outcomes**: Study of Growth Stage Businesses; Incubator feasibility study

B. Support efforts to foster an environment attractive and attentive to the needs of small businesses and entrepreneurs, and that will increase **economic activity and revitalize downtowns**.

- **Actions**: Downtown revitalization efforts will include initiatives to better understand both market needs (such as with the Downtown Orange Market Assessment) and infrastructure needs (such as better parking access, streetscape improvements and Complete Street assessments to improve how people move within these areas).
- **Lead and Partners**: FRCOG, Municipalities, Business associations and Chambers of Commerce
- **Products/Outcomes**: Use of Market Assessment survey tool; Complete Street assessment’s conducted

\textsuperscript{21} The Pioneer Valley Growth Business Study is available online at [http://frcog.org/program-services/economic-development-planning/](http://frcog.org/program-services/economic-development-planning/).
BUSINESS

This section focuses on goals and strategies targeted to grow individual businesses and industry clusters for the purpose of creating jobs and generating greater economic activity in the region.

6. Accelerate business development and sustainability through direct support.

The business development eco-system in the CEDS Region is anchored by the Franklin County Community Development Corporation (FCCDC) based in Greenfield and which administers a business assistance program, business lending program and operates the Venture Center and Western Mass. Food Processing Center. The FCCDC works collaboratively with state and federal business development agencies as well as other business related organizations within and outside of the region. Through referrals and cooperation, a strong network of business support exists in the region. The following objective seeks to enhance this network and target specific actions to support business growth.

A. Ensure access to business development assistance and entrepreneurial training, and promote the availability of these resources.

- **Actions**: Sustain the availability of direct technical assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs, which includes one-on-one counseling, workshops, business planning classes, and referrals to business support services. Create marketing materials targeted to entrepreneurs and new businesses as well as existing businesses that may need assistance, and ensure these materials are distributed to partners and others to share as needed.

- **Lead and Partners**: FCCDC, SMBDCN, VVM, FCCC, FRCOG

- **Products/Outcomes**: Increased number of participants from Franklin County; Creation and distribution of promotional materials

B. Ensure access to non-traditional and gap commercial financing for small businesses and entrepreneurs.

- **Actions**: Sustain and expand access to non-traditional and gap financing through existing and new loan and investment funds

- **Lead and Partners**: FCCDC, PV Grows Loan Fund, Common Capital

- **Products/Outcomes**: Amount of loans or investments made from local funding programs
C. Coordinate opportunities for area businesses to learn about how to sell goods or services to **governments and large institutions**.

- **Actions**: Coordinate programming on how local businesses can be a state certified minority and/or women owned business or participate in state procurement opportunities; and coordinate networking events to connect local businesses with institutions and/or large corporations.

- **Lead and Partners**: FRCOG, FCCC, FCCDC, EDC, MA Supplier Diversity Office, PV Grows

- **Products/Outcomes**: Broad participation in workshop and networking events; increase number of Franklin County businesses participating in state contracts

D. Develop programming to help with **business succession planning**.

- **Actions**: Assess if there is a critical mass of business owners approaching retirement age, and if so, determine the best manner to deliver this programming.

- **Lead and Partners**: FRCOG, FCCDC, Cooperative Institute, UMDI

- **Products/Outcomes**: Completed research study of business owners; Event and/or programing implemented

E. Explore what goods and services are sourced from outside the region that could be **provided from within the region**.

i. **Actions**: An idea emerged from the 2014 Creating a Bold New Economy Forum was the creation of a worker-owned, commercial scale laundry cooperative to serve institutions, with Baystate Franklin Medical Center as the anchor customer. The project proposes to provide skill development and employment opportunities for people who face significant challenges when entering or re-entering the workforce.

ii. **Lead and Partners**: Greening Greenfield, the Wellspring Collaborative, Baystate Franklin Medical Center, Franklin County Sheriff’s Office, CA, GCC

iii. **Products/Outcomes**: Implementation strategy for partners

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

As stated by the EDA, a region’s economic prosperity is linked to its ability to prevent, withstand and quickly recover from major disruptions to its economic base. The concept of economic resilience incorporates the needs of individual business to the needs of the broader economy. As described in the Economic Resilience section of this Plan, there is an active and robust emergency preparedness community in the region, led by the Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council (WRHSAC). The WRHSAC has implemented an impressive range of planning and preparedness initiatives to support
first responders and emergency personnel. This work has required tremendous outreach and the creation of informational materials, including the WesternMassReady.org website. Currently, efforts are underway to better engage the business community to be prepared and part of this emergency preparedness system.

A. Assist individual businesses and organizations to be prepared in case of emergencies and to encourage their employees to be prepared.
   - **Actions**: Provide materials and host a workshop for businesses and organizations on how to be prepared in case of emergency.
   - **Lead and Partners**: FRCOG, WRHSAC, FCCC, FCCDC
   - **Products/Outcomes**: Dissemination of materials; Workshop participation

B. Support the engagement of business entities in the communication framework for responding to and recovering from emergencies.
   - **Actions**: Facilitate connections between emergency management leaders, other community organizations active in disasters, and business community leaders.
   - **Lead and Partners**: FRCOG, WRHSAC, FCCC
   - **Products/Outcomes**: Business entities included in communication framework at the region and/or municipal levels

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

The greater Franklin County region has several key industry clusters that have the opportunity to develop and grow, which will secure current jobs and create opportunities for new jobs. While these objectives are also applicable under previous goals, they are grouped together here by cluster.

**Forest, Farm, and Food Production**
There are several organizations that are championing efforts to strength and grow this cluster in Franklin County and the broader region. PV Grows is a collaborative network of individuals and organizations, including CISA, FCCDC, FRCOG, UMass and others. Their mission is “dedicated to enhancing the ecological and economic sustainability and vitality of the Pioneer Valley food

More in-depth information about the Forest, Farm and Food Production Cluster and proposed activities is available through The Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership and the Franklin County Farm and Food System Project at [www.frcog.org](http://www.frcog.org).
A Franklin County focused initiative includes the FRCOG-led Franklin County Farm and Food System Project, which focuses on food system infrastructure, processing, and distribution as well as on food access. Another initiative co-led by the FRCOG is The Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership, which is exploring sustainable, forest-based economic development.

A. Create business opportunities that use local forest products or leverage forest land to generate economic activity.
   - Actions: Implement the projects and recommendations of the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership Project, such as conducting a feasibility study for locating a wood pellet manufacturing plant in the area, develop a local marketing campaign for wood products, and provide funding for outdoor recreation infrastructure improvements.
   - Lead and Partners: FRCOG, BRPC, MA EOEEA, MA DCR, USFS, Franklin Land Trust, UMass
   - Products/Outcomes: Completion of specified studies to support implementation of new business and economic activity

B. Expand use of the Western Mass. Food Processing Center and encourage greater institutional buying of local food products.
   - Actions: Continue to expand the use of the Western Mass. Food Processing Center by food entrepreneurs as well as ventures seeking to increase the value of locally grown foods, such as through the Massachusetts Farm to Institution Project. This is being accomplished through direct technical assistance and Center improvements (such as a new individual quick freeze apparatus and expanded freezer). Efforts to connect locally grown and processed foods to large institutions (such as colleges, public schools, hospitals and others) has been successful and is to be expanded.
   - Lead and Partners: FCCDC, PV Grows, Mass Farm to School
   - Products/Outcomes: Increased volume of local food processed at the Food Processing Center and sold

C. Determine the feasibility of creating a shared cold storage facility in the region for use by farmers, food producers, and emergency food organizations.
   - Actions: Presently there is limited cold storage space in the region, with some farmers and food producers having to transport produce from Franklin County to Hampden County for storing and transport it back for processing. Confirming potential users of a shared facility and identifying their needs and potential location for a facility to be conducted.

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22 PV Grows website, www.pvgrows.net.
- **Lead and Partners**: PV Grows, FCCDC, FRCOG
- **Outcomes**: Feasibility study completion

D. Establish access to **small scale poultry processing** in the region for use by area farmers.
   - **Actions**: Work is underway to determine what is needed to establish access to small scale poultry processing in the region, either as a fixed facility or a mobile facility with a predictable schedule of availability.
   - **Lead and Partners**: New England Small Farm Institute, Just Roots, PV Grows
   - **Products/Outcomes**: Establishment of poultry processing facility or access to a mobile poultry processing unit

**Tourism**

According to the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce (FCCC), the typical profile of visitors to this area is people who enjoy history, outdoor recreation and the arts. Families also come to visit students at the area’s independent schools or colleges. Major marketing by the FCCC and the other nearby Regional Tourism Councils is directed to the metropolitan New York market and is generally successful. There is great interest in encouraging more visitors and for visitors to stay longer, as opposed to day trips or stop-overs on the way to another location. The longer stay would translate into more dollars spent. Another perspective on the importance of the Tourism cluster is that the qualities of the region that attract visitors can also attract new residents and businesses, and be a recruiting tool for businesses seeking to hire employees from outside the area.

E. Assess the current needs and expansion potential of the **adventure and outdoor recreation** cluster in the region.

i. Gain a better understanding of the adventure and outdoor recreation attractions and services in the region, and identify potential gaps and opportunities to enhance the cluster.
   - **Actions**: Conduct an inventory of the adventure and outdoor recreation attractions and services, collect data about the number of participants, and identify infrastructure gaps (from visitor information access to industry support services) or potential areas of concerns (such as the former Ramage Paper mill in Monroe Bridge).
   - **Lead and Partners**: FRCOG, FCCC, NQCC, Business Associations, and cluster businesses
   - **Products/Outcomes**: Inventory of attractions and services, and infrastructure gaps; Number of participants engaged in cluster
ii. Asses the feasibility to develop **Outdoor Recreation and Immersion Centers** in Downtown Orange.

- **Actions**: Conduct a study to determine the feasibility of developing these proposed Centers in Downtown Orange.
- **Lead and Partners**: Town of Orange
- **Products/Outcomes**: Study completed to support development of new attractions

F. Increase number of **visitors by rail** that come to Franklin County by encouraging tourism opportunities.

- **Actions**: Coordinate outreach to transportation, tourism and hospitality firms to encourage promotion of services to visitors travelling by rail, and to work cooperatively to create new tourism opportunities (such as through packaged itineraries).
- **Lead and Partners**: FRCOG, FCCC
- **Products/Outcomes**: Increase in number of travelers by rail disembarking in Greenfield

**Creative Economy**

The region’s rural landscape and quality of life, as well as its relatively affordable cost of living, has encouraged many artisans to start-up businesses or pursue their careers professionally. The revenues earned circulate within the community longer than if the business was owned from outside the area. In addition, this cluster is generally environmentally friendly and contributes to the overall character of the community without significantly using town resources. And as artists and craftspeople grow and expand their businesses, they can provide employment and mentoring opportunities.

G. Promote the growth of the Creative Economy by creating networking and professional development opportunities for individuals working in this cluster to connect with each other and learn about how to sustain and grow their businesses.

- **Actions**: Coordinate Art Buzz events and a Creative Economy Summit to provide networking and professional development opportunities.
- **Lead and Partners**: FACP, PVCEN
- **Products/Outcomes**: Broad participation by people working in the Creative Economy at Summit and/or Art Buzz events
H. Complete a **creative economy asset mapping project** for the West County sub-region that could be replicated across the county, to identify and better understand this cluster’s capacities, skills, needs and resources, and how it may be integrated with other clusters and industries. Information gained from this project could be used as the basis for a regional Creative Economy Plan and branding effort.

- **Actions**: complete the Connecting Commerce & Community: Creative Economy Survey for West County, and use the materials developed and lessons learned to replicate the project across Franklin County.
- **Lead and Partners**: GSFABA, FACP, PVCEN, local arts organizations and businesses
- **Products/Outcomes**: Completion of Creative Economy survey responses for West County

I. Support the **sustainability of venues** for arts, culture and education in existing (such as Shea Theater) and proposed facilities (such as FCCDC’s Bank Building in Greenfield, Auditorium Cultural Art’s Center in Orange, and York Theater in Athol).

- **Actions**: Conduct a region-wide inventory of existing and proposed venues to better understand their capacity, performance space, and management structure. Best practices and areas for collaboration will be identified.
- **Lead and Partners**: FRCOG, FACP, Arts organizations, Venue owners
- **Products/Outcomes**: Completion of study

**Manufacturing**
There are several prominent manufacturing clusters in the region, such as metal products and machining, plastics, paper and packaging, and advanced materials. To help the businesses operating in the manufacturing clusters succeed, they need an available and skilled work force, suitable sites to locate, and access to support, when needed. Each of those topics have been discussed in previous goals, specifically the Franklin-area Manufacturing Outreach Project (Goal 1), access to suitable industrial space (Goals 4 and 5), and direct business support (Goal 6). The following objective is specific to a broader effort to create a center of excellence for manufacturing in the greater region.

J. Participate in exploring the region’s ability to pursue an **EDA Manufacturing Communities Partnership** award that would leverage the cooperation of industry, academic R&D, and economic development agencies to develop a manufacturing center of excellence in the region. As part of this process forge relationship with UMASS to assess how university R&D can better connect to area businesses or be spun off as independent ventures.
• *Actions*: Engage with University of Massachusetts and economic development leaders in western Massachusetts to determine the suitability of pursuing an EDA Manufacturing Communities Partnership award.

• *Lead and Partners*: FRCOG, PVPC, EDC, UMASS

• *Products/Outcomes*: Decision to pursue EDA Manufacturing Communities Partnership award.
Chapter 5: Evaluation Framework

As a designated Economic Development District (EDD), the Greater Franklin County CEDS Program reports on specific performance measures to the EDA on an annual basis. These measures are used to evaluate the development, progress and implementation of the CEDS Program in the region. These measures reflect the EDA’s mission to create and retain jobs and to stimulate industrial and commercial growth, particularly in areas of economic distress. The performance measures applicable to the CEDS Program are specified in the EDA’s Planning Partnership award to the FRCOG. As a result, the measures stated below may be amended, as appropriate to the contract between the EDA and the FRCOG. Following each measurement is an approach to quantify and/or monitor progress. How to complete these measurements may be adjusted, per EDA guidance.

It should be noted that it is challenging to have an accurate annual account of the number of jobs and amount of private investment leveraged due to the long-term nature of some CEDS Program initiatives. Many of the projects pursued are multi-year in nature. For example, the creation of an industrial park, the installation of infrastructure or the redevelopment of a building, may take years from the initial planning stage to completion. Upon completion, the amount of private investment and jobs created may be calculated as businesses lease or purchase property. In the case of infrastructure projects, such as the deployment of last mile broadband access, sometimes it is not possible to account for all the jobs and investment made as a result this network. However, studies\(^{23}\) have indicated that these projects produce a positive economic outcome.

To evaluate the progress of 2015 CEDS Plan goals and strategies, the following performance measures will be tracked annually.

**Measurement #1 - Number of Projects**

As the number of CEDS Plan projects and initiatives and related efforts are implemented, they will be documented in the CEDS Annual Report in the year the project or initiative was launched.

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\(^{23}\) In 2006, a report titled “Measuring Broadband’s Economic Impact” was prepared for the EDA by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Carnegie Mellon University. The report states that “the results support the view that broadband access does enhance economic growth and performance, and that the assumed economic impacts of broadband are real and measurable.” This preliminary data produced on a national scale determined that broadband added about 1.1.4% to the job growth rate from 1998-2002, and added about 0.5-1.2% to the growth rate of business establishments for the same time period. [http://cfp.mit.edu/publications/CFP_Papers/Measuring_bb_econ_impact-final.pdf](http://cfp.mit.edu/publications/CFP_Papers/Measuring_bb_econ_impact-final.pdf)
**Measurement #2 - Number of Jobs Created and Retained**

As CEDS Plan projects and initiatives and related efforts are implemented, the number of jobs created and retained will be documented in the CEDS Annual Report in the year the project or initiative was completed.

**Measurement #3 - Number and Types of Investments Undertaken**

As CEDS Plan projects and initiatives and related efforts are implemented, the number and types of investments undertaken (including the amount of private sector investment made) in the region will be reported in the CEDS Annual Report.

**Measurement #4 – Changes in Economic Environment in the Region**

Changes in the general economic environment in CEDS Region will be documented in the Annual Report, with particular attention to the size of the labor force, the number of private sector jobs, and the average wage per job. The following table lists the currently available data for these statistics.

**Table 9: Select Economic Statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>CEDS Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014 Size of Labor Force</td>
<td>39,578</td>
<td>64,388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(based on where people live)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Number of Total Private</td>
<td>19,917</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector Employed*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(based on where the job is</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>located)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Average Wage Per Job</td>
<td>$37,230</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(based on where the job is</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>located)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Massachusetts Labor and Workforce Development, Labor Market Information, March 2015; U.S. Department of Commerce, County Business Patterns, 2013; Commerce Department, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2013

*Data source only includes private-sector establishments with five or more employees, and as a result does not include government or self-employed workers.
CEDS Committee membership consists of appointments from each member municipality and appointments from regional entities. Not all seats on the Committee are filled. For municipalities that do not appoint an individual to the Committee, the Town’s Board of Selectmen is sent meeting notices.

Table 10: CEDS Committee Members for 2014-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appointing Authority</th>
<th>2014-2015 CEDS Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town of Athol</td>
<td>Andrea Buglione</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Bernardston</td>
<td>Stanley Garland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Buckland</td>
<td>Michael McCusker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Charlemont</td>
<td>Vaughn Tower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Colrain</td>
<td>Eileen Sauvageau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Deerfield</td>
<td>Carolyn Shores-Ness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Gill</td>
<td>Sharon Howell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Greenfield</td>
<td>Robert Pyers/Larry Jutres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Heath</td>
<td>Art Schwenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Leverett</td>
<td>Heather Hutchinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Montague</td>
<td>Walter Ramsey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of New Salem</td>
<td>John Ryan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Northfield</td>
<td>Jerry Wagener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Orange</td>
<td>Kevin Kennedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Shelburne</td>
<td>Kevin Parsons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Wendell</td>
<td>Nan Riebschlaeger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Whately</td>
<td>Jonathan Edwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRCOG Executive Committee</td>
<td>Mayor Bill Martin; Alternate: Linda Dunlavy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Martha Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin Regional Planning Board</td>
<td>Tom Hutcheson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jeanie Schermesser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Andrea Donlon</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ann Darling</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Winnephred Stone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin County Community Development Corporation</td>
<td>Gary Dillensneider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Waite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin County Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Ann Hamilton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Shelburne Falls Area Business Association</td>
<td>Mary Vilbon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin-Hampshire Regional Employment Board</td>
<td>Patricia Crosby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin County Housing &amp; Redevelopment Authority</td>
<td>Robin Sherman; Alternate: MJ Adams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Economic Development District (EDD) Governing Board membership consists of appointments made by the CEDS Committee to meet EDA guidelines.

Table 11: EDD Board Members for 2014-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Representation</th>
<th>2014-2015 CEDS Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chamber Executive Director</td>
<td>Ann Hamilton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamber Executive Director</td>
<td>Mary Vilbon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected Official</td>
<td>Carolyn Shores-Ness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected Official</td>
<td>Nan Riebschlaeger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Employee</td>
<td>Robert Pyers/Larry Jutres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Employee</td>
<td>Walter Ramsey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Employee</td>
<td>Kevin Kennedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Employee</td>
<td>Linda Dunlavy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Employee</td>
<td>Sam Lovejoy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Secondary Education</td>
<td>Art Schwenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>Michael McCusker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce Development</td>
<td>Gary Dillensneider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce Development</td>
<td>Patricia Crosby</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B – Economic Development Project Survey Responses

Using an online survey form, FRCOG requested information about regional economic development projects that will create new employment opportunities, promote investment and business growth, and make Franklin County more economically resilient and competitive. These projects may not benefit a single private individual or business. The request was sent to CEDS Region municipalities, and regional organizations involved in community, business, workforce and/or economic development, and education. Twenty-five projects were submitted. The following table is a list of these submitted projects in alphabetical order by Project Location. Some text in the Project Description has been edited for the purposes of formatting. However, the project profile submitted is available from the FRCOG. As the 2015 CEDS Plan is updated annually, surveys may be submitted by municipalities and regional organizations to include additional projects to this list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>Project Location</th>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Lead Organization</th>
<th>Project Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education &amp; Entrepreneurial Center</td>
<td>Athol</td>
<td>Funding for lease or purchase of modern facility to be used by local schools, MWCC, and GCC to host classes, particularly in tech and innovative skills development.</td>
<td>North Quabbin Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Town of Athol, Mt. Watchusett Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Route 2 Exit</td>
<td>Athol</td>
<td>A new Route 2 Exit, between exits 17 and 18, would relieve congestion at other exits and provide much-needed access for manufacturing sites (current and future) along South Athol Rd.</td>
<td>Town of Athol</td>
<td>Mass DOT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LP Athol &quot;Twist Mill&quot; Redevelopment Project</td>
<td>Athol - 134 Chestnut Hill Ave</td>
<td>This 360,000 SF riverfront facility is ripe for redevelopment into a multi-use residential and retail center, and has received support from local and state leaders. It requires some public infrastructure investment.</td>
<td>Town of Athol</td>
<td>LP Athol Inc., Mass-Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York Theater Redevelopment</td>
<td>Athol - 469 Main St</td>
<td>Main Street Athol historic theater formerly known as the York Theater, now vacant, has redevelopment potential as multi-use performance and event center.</td>
<td>Town of Athol</td>
<td>North Quabbin Chamber of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Bidwell Property&quot; Development Feasibility Study</td>
<td>Athol - South Athol Rd</td>
<td>100 acres owned by the Town of Athol is a prime site for industrial or mixed-use development. A feasibility study would create a vision for future uses and highway access (&quot;New Route 2 Exit&quot;).</td>
<td>Town of Athol</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Title</td>
<td>Project Location</td>
<td>Project Description</td>
<td>Lead Organization</td>
<td>Project Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelburne Falls Market Analysis</td>
<td>Buckland and Shelburne - Village Business District</td>
<td>The last Market Analysis was completed in 1997. Shelburne Falls has been fortunate in the past when storefronts became available they would quickly fill. However, that is not the case now. While very successful during May - November, the business district has become dependent on tourism and struggles during the off season. An updated Analysis would ask, what type of businesses would thrive, among other questions.</td>
<td>Greater Shelburne Falls Area Business Association (GSFABA)</td>
<td>Shelburne Select Board; Buckland Select Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Wastewater Management</td>
<td>Conway - Village Center</td>
<td>Exploring options for a community septic system or other wastewater management option to allow increased development in the village center to address the problem of the lack of capacity for growth, even by infill, due to the lack of wastewater management.</td>
<td>Conway Planning Board</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Building Capacity for Economic Growth in Franklin County</td>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td>To host a one day Summit for Franklin County Business Associations and Chamber of Commerce’s that will provide the opportunity to increase awareness and share resources, strategies, and models that will assist in strengthening each organization’s capacity.</td>
<td>Joint</td>
<td>GSFABA; Northfield Area Tourism &amp; Business Assoc.; Franklin County Chamber; North Quabbin Chamber; Montague Business Assoc.; Turners Falls RiverCulture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connecting Commerce &amp; Community: Creative Economy Survey</td>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td>GSFABA was awarded a two-year Adams Grant for the first phase of a model economic program for West County. With this it developed and implemented an assets mapping project to identify and understand capacities, skills and assets of artists and cultural institutions, and then other sectors of the West County economy. In 2014, the Adams Grant enabled GSFABA to redesign its website to disseminate its newly developed Creative Economy Survey and gather data about the arts in Franklin County. There are three activities of this initiative that GSFABA will carry out: (1) Asset Mapping, (2) Public Outreach &amp; Community engagement, and (3) Planning.</td>
<td>Greater Shelburne Falls Area Business Association</td>
<td>Fostering Arts &amp; Culture Project; Pioneer Valley Creative Economy Network; Local arts organizations, business associations and chambers of commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Title</td>
<td>Project Location</td>
<td>Project Description</td>
<td>Lead Organization</td>
<td>Project Partners</td>
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<td>Franklin-area Manufacturing Outreach Project</td>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td>Ensure the continuing success and effectiveness of the Middle Skills Manufacturing Initiative, which contributed to a state-of-the-art training lab at FCTS and a 13-week advanced training program. Key to the effort has been the FHREB’s Manufacturing Market Manager/Coach, which engages businesses; coaches candidates; places graduates into jobs; and is helping to pilot broader “Foundational Manufacturing” training at GCC. The grant for this position will be exhausted by April 2016. This project would ensure outreach to manufacturers continues; training needs and curriculum are kept up-to-date; and new job opportunities are identified and promoted.</td>
<td>Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board</td>
<td>Franklin County Technical School; Greenfield Community College; Area employers including VSS, Inc. duMont Co., Kennametal, Inc., Bete Fog Nozzle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greenfield Laundry Project</td>
<td>Franklin County - Greenfield or Turners Falls</td>
<td>A worker owned cooperative laundry is proposed with Baystate Franklin Medical Center (BFMC) as the lead consumer. Laundry will serve BFMC, nursing homes, restaurants and others. It will replace the present provider which is a national company. The goal is to create high quality services to meet needs of the consumer, while cutting transportation costs and allowing for quick response. In addition, the laundry will partner with Community Action and the Franklin County House of Correction to offer low-income people an opportunity to learn skills, become equity owners, and engage in new ways with the community. Ten organizations are involved in the planning process.</td>
<td>Greening Greenfield, Wellspring Collaborative, Baystate Franklin Medical Center</td>
<td>Franklin County Sheriff; Community Action; Greenfield Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WiredWest Fiber Network</td>
<td>Franklin County - WiredWest towns</td>
<td>Construction and operation of a regional fiber broadband network to serve all homes and businesses in participating towns.</td>
<td>WiredWest MLP Cooperative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenfield TelNet Project</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>Municipal Telecommunications Services project to be constructed.</td>
<td>City of Greenfield</td>
<td>Kelley Management Group; Greenfield Community Technology Advisory Committee, MBI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Title</td>
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<td>Project Partners</td>
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<td>Former Besley-Bendix Property Eco-Industrial Park</td>
<td>Greenfield - 180 Laurel St</td>
<td>The City wants to move develop a garden industrial eco-park. The Eco-park would be developed using green technology for infrastructure, be fast track permitted and offer reduced utility costs via a PV solar array. This site has been identified as the preferred site for an interconnection and data facility. Greenfield is seeking funding to construct the Laurel St Extension with underground utilities. Greenfield is also seeking funding to demolish the existing dilapidated 94,000 SF building on the site.</td>
<td>City of Greenfield</td>
<td>FRCOG; Commonwealth of Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Treatment Center</td>
<td>Greenfield - 298 Federal St</td>
<td>Substantial rehabilitation of abandoned industrial buildings and brownfield site for a 65-Bed acute and intermediate treatment of addiction disorders.</td>
<td>City of Greenfield</td>
<td>401 Liberty Street, LLC; Behavior Health Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olive Street Parking Garage</td>
<td>Greenfield - Olive St</td>
<td>Parking garage for supplemental parking for offices, businesses, courthouse, John W. Olver Transit Center, and visitors and shoppers.</td>
<td>City of Greenfield</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WiredWest Final Mile</td>
<td>Heath</td>
<td>Final mile of Mass Broadband Initiative (MBI) providing high speed fiber internet to homes/businesses to be overseen by WiredWest.</td>
<td>WiredWest</td>
<td>MBI; FRCOG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leverett Fiber to the Home Project</td>
<td>Leverett</td>
<td>Municipal construction of high speed internet to every household in town.</td>
<td>Leverett Municipal Light Plant and Town of Leverett</td>
<td>Crocker Communications; Millennium Communications; HG&amp;E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canal District Revitalization</td>
<td>Montague - Downtown Turners Falls</td>
<td>Public-private partnership to rehabilitate five mill sites by performing environmental remediation, access and infrastructure improvements, and marketing municipally-owned Strathmore Mill complex to qualified developers. Funding needed to repair Strathmore Pedestrian Bridge, and remediate Strathmore Mill complex of hazardous and asbestos containing materials.</td>
<td>Montague Planning and Conservation Department</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Turnpike Road Industrial Park</td>
<td>Montague - Off Sandy Lane</td>
<td>45 acre planned light-industrial park on municipal land. Funding needed to extend infrastructure on Sandy Lane.</td>
<td>Montague Board of Selectmen</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Title</td>
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<td>Project Description</td>
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<td>Project Partners</td>
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<td>Visitors Center</td>
<td>Northfield - Main Street</td>
<td>Center would include: gallery, public bathrooms and parking. Seeking a planning and feasibility grant to determine a suitable location, funding needs and pre-development.</td>
<td>Northfield Business Association</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>West River Business Incubator Development</td>
<td>Orange - 100-140 West Main St</td>
<td>The Town of Orange sees need to support an active and growing business cluster in and around the Orange Innovation Center. The need for additional parking, lighting and amenities (such as trails, a fitness course) would remove the barrier to growth and development. Partners to the project, the Innovation Center, OIC Fitness Club and Honest Weight Artisan Beer are all in need of these improvements to ensure future growth.</td>
<td>Town of Orange</td>
<td>Orange Innovation Center; OIC Fitness Club; Honest Weight Artisan Beer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Arts Center Development</td>
<td>Orange - 6 Prospect St</td>
<td>The Town would like to be a catalyst in developing a sustainable Cultural Arts Center in downtown Orange. The existing Auditorium located at 6 Prospect ST is an excellent performance space designed by Architect, Elbridge Boyden (same design as Mechanics Hall in Worcester, MA) and is currently underutilized. The performance space has the potential to become a cultural arts center for the arts community in Town.</td>
<td>Town of Orange</td>
<td>The Dance Studio; Quabbin Woods Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Regional Attraction Through Recreation &amp; Immersion Centers</td>
<td>Orange - Downtown</td>
<td>The Town of Orange would like to pull existing plans, studies and concepts into one overarching study to both verify and quantify the priority economic development strategy that has identify to-date. The Town could realize real economic transformation by developing attraction through &quot;Recreation and Immersion Centers&quot;. We would like to develop meaningful data to support this concept.</td>
<td>Town of Orange</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warwick Solar Farm on closed landfill</td>
<td>Warwick - Allen Lot</td>
<td>In 2014 Town Meeting approved by-right zoning for commercial solar photovoltaic development on this 53 acre parcel, which has been approved by the Attorney General. Planning board created site plan review process and Selectboard instituted expedited permitting process for this targeted site.</td>
<td>Warwick Building and Energy Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C – Economic Development Project Survey Form
Projects to Support Economic Development in Franklin County

As part of creating the 2015 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Plan for the greater Franklin County region, FRCOG is seeking information about regional economic development projects that will create new employment opportunities, promote investment and business growth, and make Franklin County more economically resilient and competitive. Please complete this survey to tell us about your project, so that it may be considered for inclusion in the 2015 CEDS Plan.

Examples of the types of projects that could be included in the 2015 CEDS Plan are:
- Business incubator, business accelerator, or industrial park.
- Targeted workforce training or skills development program.
- Entrepreneurship or business development program.
- A regional initiative or study that will help grow a key industry or cluster.
- Critical infrastructure improvement that directly results in greater economic activity in an area.
- An event, capacity building program, resource document or other discrete activity that would help spur business growth and entrepreneurship.

Please note that this is not an application for grant funding. There is no guarantee that by responding to this survey or participating in this process that a project will be included in the 2015 CEDS Plan or will receive funding. For projects deemed potentially eligible and competitive for federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) funding, project sponsors may be asked to provide additional information.

Minimum criteria for consideration in the 2015 CEDS Plan:
- Project will not benefit a single individual or business.
- Project will result in the creation or retention of jobs in Franklin County, MA.
- Project will spur business growth or increase investment by private businesses in the region.
- Project will contribute to the region’s economic competitiveness and/or foster business growth.
- Project will require some form of public investment to be feasible.
- Project has an identified project advocate who will champion its implementation.
- If the project is for construction and is seeking public funding, the project must be on property that is municipally-owned or owned by a non-profit organization.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Jessica Atwood, FRCOG Senior Economic Development Planner at jatwood@frcog.org.
Projects to Support Economic Development in Franklin County

1. Project Title: 

2. Project Area/Location: 

3. Project Description: 

4. Lead Organization for Project: 

5. Project Partners (if any):
   Name, Organization: 
   Name, Organization: 
   Name, Organization: 

6. Primary Contact Person for Project
   Name: 
   Organization: 
   Title: 
   Email: 
   Phone: 

7. How will this project result in creating new employment opportunities, promote investment and business growth, and make Franklin County more economically resilient and competitive?

8. Will a particular industry or economic cluster be strengthened through this project? If so, what industry or cluster (more than one may be selected)?

- Agriculture, Forestry and Food Processing
- Arts, Entertainment, Recreation & Visitor Industries
- Education & Knowledge Creation
- Healthcare & Social Assistance
- Information Technology & Infrastructure Services
- Manufacturing – Plastic Products
- Manufacturing – Metal Products
- Manufacturing – Paper Products
- Manufacturing – Wood Products
- Marketing, Design and Publishing
- Professional Business Services
- Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency
- Other (please specify)
Projects to Support Economic Development in Franklin County

9. Has this project been included in a Master Plan, Community Development Strategy, Strategic Plan or other similar document produced by a municipality, institution or organization?

☐ No
☐ Yes

If yes, please specify:

10. Please select the response(s) that best describe support for the project (check all that apply):

☐ Project has been discussed publicly and public support has been expressed.
☐ Project has the expressed support of the Board of Selectmen or Mayor for where the project is located.
☐ Project partners have committed to support project implementation.
☐ Some funding or in-kind support has been committed to project.

Other (please specify)

11. Estimated Project Cost and Amount of Funding Secured

Estimated project cost for implementation

Amount of funding secured

12. Please describe the source(s), amount, and status of funding and/or in-kind support committed to project implementation, and additional resources needed.
13. Any additional comments?

14. Project Profile submitted by (if different from Primary Contact Person):
   Name:
   Organization:
   Title:
   Email:
   Phone: