Greater Franklin County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2019 Annual Report

Prepared by Franklin Regional Council of Governments

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Cover Images: Site redevelopment projects in Franklin County, MA, from left to right: The redevelopment of the former Ramage Paper/Deerfield Glassine Specialty Paper wood structure into a new Depot Street retaining wall and Monroe Bridge Overlook park; Sign at the former Usher Mill site in Erving, which is now the Erving Riverfront Park on the Millers River; and the Olive Street Parking Garage in Downtown Greenfield. Photo credit: FRCOG.

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Greater Franklin County CEDS 2019 Annual Report

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Chapter 1: An Economic Development Roadmap

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;
- connects 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.

The purpose of economic development planning is to advance policies, programs, and projects to encourage economic opportunity for all. For our small towns and rural region, economic development creates a supportive environment for residents and businesses to prosper, which can contribute to a municipality’s ability to generate revenue. The 2015 CEDS Plan identified strategies to implement over five years to achieve this vision. The 2019 Annual Report is the last update to describe changes in economic conditions, report on project implementation, and reflect on the region's evolving needs and opportunities for economic prosperity. A new five-year CEDS Plan will be released in 2020.

The strategies are grouped in three major categories: people, places and businesses. Some strategies build upon existing success stories and planning, while others seek to create new capabilities. The intended outcome of the Plan is to encourage sustainable job growth and create a more resilient regional economy. The sustainable development theme is expanded upon in the Franklin County Regional Plan for Sustainable Development from 2013.

The CEDS Plan and Annual Reports are created by FRCOG staff under the guidance of the CEDS Committee and Economic Development District (EDD) Board with input provided by member municipalities, partnering organizations and the public. Appendix A lists CEDS Committee & EDD Governing 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.

Chapter 2: Summary Background

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

Geography
Located in western Massachusetts, the greater Franklin County region has a predominantly rural landscape, with over 75% of its acreage in forest and open land\(^2\). 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 communities are also faced with the similar challenges common to rural areas, such as lower wages, limited job opportunities and difficulty accessing

\(^2\) MassGIS, 2005 Land Use Data Set
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 region.

**Transportation & Infrastructure**

The region is easily accessible via two of the state’s primary transportation routes, Interstate-91 and Route 2. Within the region 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 relatively recent addition to the transportation network is the return of passenger rail service to Greenfield for the first time since the 1980s. The Amtrak Vermonter service provides once daily service from northern Vermont to New York City and Washington DC. The current schedule is proposed to be expanded in summer 2019 to allow for multiple trains in each direction per day.

The public transit system plays a vital role for both workers and employers. However, rural regions are challenged by the inefficiency of traditional transit systems and by the funding available to provide transit service over a large area. The need for owning a vehicle adds to the burden of transportation and housing costs for residents.

A comprehensive review of the region’s transportation network and plans for the future is included in the Franklin County Long-Range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which is produced by FRCOG’s Transportation Planning Program. The latest RTP
updated is anticipated to be released in summer 2019. An 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. Among the goals in the RTP are to maintain the infrastructure, improve safety and security, increase transportation options, and promote the economic development of the region while maintaining its rural character.

Access to power is essential infrastructure. According to the Energy Information Administration (EIA), the average retail price for electricity in the state was the fourth highest in the country in 2017. Massachusetts is not alone, as other New England states have high rates in compared to other areas of the continental United States. For example, Connecticut is the third highest after Hawaii and Alaska, and following Massachusetts are Rhode Island and New Hampshire.

According to the EIA, two of the state’s largest energy plants are located in the region. They are the Northfield Mountain and Bear Swamp pumped storage facilities. While natural gas is the largest source of energy used in the Commonwealth, alternative sources such as solar and wind have grown significantly in recent years. From 2013 to 2017, the number of megawatts capable of being produced in the state for solar has grown by 392% and for wind by 27%.

Like transportation and electricity, broadband access impacts every aspect of life, business, and community. Access is essential for K-12 education and higher learning, researching and applying for jobs, conducting day-to-day business activities, being engaged in civic

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3 FRCOG Transportation Planning Program, www.frcog.org/program-services/transportation-planning/
issues, ensuring public safety communication, using health service applications, and more. There is an ever increasing assumption of broadband access, which puts our region’s residents and businesses at a disadvantage. Broadband access not only allows for this region to communicate with the world. Broadband access is vital to this region’s economy, and to the overall economy of the Commonwealth too.

Residents and businesses without access to broadband, and particularly those in rural areas, are at a substantial disadvantage. As The National Broadband Plan states, “broadband can be a platform for significant economic, cultural and social transformation, overcoming distance and transcending the limitations of one’s physical surroundings.” Lack of access does not only hinder growth of new business ventures, it also limits economic opportunity for individuals and contributes to community-wide challenges, such as population loss and a weakened real estate market.

The CEDS Region, like other areas of western Massachusetts, has both significant assets and gaps in this important network. The following reviews both the opportunities and challenges in the current broadband infrastructure landscape in the region.

MassBroadband 123 is an open access, fiber-optic, “middle mile” network that connects 120 cities/towns in western and north-central Massachusetts to the global telecom network. The network was completed in 2014 using over $90 million of state and federal funds. The network is owned by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute, a division of the quasi-state agency, the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, and is managed by a private telecom firm. Multiple internet service providers (ISPs) can use this network to offer services to Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs).

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7 For more information about MassBroadband123, go to [www.broadband.masstech.org/](http://www.broadband.masstech.org/).
that have fiber connections to MassBroadband 123 and other entities that have procured a direct connection. The capacity of this network allows for very high speed transmissions and the use of next-generation applications. It serves as the backbone infrastructure to connect the “last mile” (the local system that connects subscriber homes and businesses) to the global network.

While the region has a next generation middle mile network, there remain many communities, residents and businesses that do not have broadband access. Efforts at the state and community level are underway to resolve this lack of broadband access at the last mile for residents and businesses. Since 2014, the State has committed over $40 million to invest in unserved communities through the Last Mile Infrastructure Grant Program. With support from the MA Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development, unserved communities are pursuing fiber-to-the-premise (FTTP), new cable system franchises, or wireless last mile networks. Depending on the cost of the broadband technology selected, communities may be required to provide a local contribution in addition to State resources to fund the creation of a system.

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. It should be noted that communities with cable systems may also have gaps in their service area, creating pockets of unserved areas. The State’s Last Mile Infrastructure Grant program recently invested in towns partially served by cable to expand the coverage area to the 96% statewide average.

Map 3: Broadband Status of Franklin County Municipalities.
Source: Massachusetts Broadband Institute and The Greenfield Recorder, and map created by FRCOG, 2019.
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 constructed its own community fiber-to-the-home network, which became fully operational in 2015.

Public water and wastewater systems is another vital infrastructure component. In densely populated areas, these 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 centers 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 assessment of aquifer potential in the region 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\(^8\) estimated that Franklin County had a population of 70,926 in its 724 square miles, with the CEDS Region estimated to have 124,126 people in its 810 square miles. In comparison to last year, the population remained steady for the county and grew by 0.2% for the CEDS Region. The population density of Franklin County was approximately 98 people per square mile, and the CEDS Region was 153 people per square mile. To put these densities in perspective, Franklin County has almost the same population as Amherst, Hadley and Northampton combined, in a land area over eight times their size. Using U.S. Census Bureau decennial figures, as in Figure 1, the population peak for Franklin County was in 2000 and for the CEDS Region in 2010. Population stagnation or decline is being experienced in the surrounding rural counties as well.

Map 4 depicts population change at the county-level since 2010 for the State and nearby New Hampshire and Vermont counties. It appears that most population increases are happening in metropolitan counties, while the rural counties are declining.

Map 4: Population Change in Surrounding Counties
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau’s 2000 Census Population and 2017 Population Estimate

It has been reported that a major contributor to population growth in Massachusetts is international migration. As seen on Map 4, areas not experiencing population growth are rural counties, like Berkshire and Franklin. According to ACS 2013-2017 Five-Year Estimates, the percent of the population foreign-born was 5% in Franklin County and 8% in CEDS Region, compared to 16% and 13% for the state and nation.

Based on past demographic trends, projections provide planners with a general direction of population shifts. Recently, population projections were created by a consortium led by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and prepared by the University of Massachusetts’ Donahue Institute (UMDI) for use by Regional Transportation Plan updates.

The forecast for Franklin County shows population levels will continue to decline to 2020. A slight increase of about 0.2% will occur from 2020 to 2030 is projected, followed by a decline of 2% from 2030 to 2040. For the thirty year period from 2010 to 2040, the projections show a -2.7% decline or a loss of over 1,900 people (see Figure 2.). These projections are created using past county trends at that time 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 in the region, if actions are not taken 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 disproportionally 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, over half the population is 45 years or older in Franklin County, while this figure is 43% and 41% respectively for the state and nation.

As older 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 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 for the regional economy.
Franklin County and the CEDS Region is significantly less racially and ethnically diverse than the state or nation. According to the ACS 2013-2017 Five-Year Estimates, 6% of Franklin County and 12% of the CEDS Region population identified themselves as being non-white or multi-racial, compared to the 21% for the state and 27% for the nation. The percent of residents who identified themselves as of Hispanic or Latino origin ethnicity for Franklin County was 4% and the CEDS Region was 5%, compared to 11% for the state and 18% for the nation.

In terms of educational attainment for the population 25 years of age and older, only 7% of Franklin County residents and CEDS Region residents do not have a high school or equivalent diploma, compared to 10% for the state and 13% for the nation. The State has a high percentage of the population (42%) with at least a Bachelor’s or Graduate or professional degree compared to the nation (31%). Franklin County (37%) and the CEDS Region (39%) 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, stay-at-home parents or those unable to work due to disability, 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 2018, the unemployment rate for Franklin County was 3.0% and the CEDS Region was 3.1%, which was lower than both the state (3.3%) and national (3.9%) rates. The 2018 unemployment rates are either the same or lower than 2017 rates. These figures reflect the trend of decreasing unemployment rates since the Great Recession, experienced from late 2007 through 2010. In 2010, unemployment rates for these areas were over twice the current rates, with the county and CEDS Region at 7.6%, and the state at 8.3% and nation at 9.6%. High unemployment rates can indicate a weakened overall economy. However, very low unemployment rates can reflect problems in the economy as well. There needs to be workers available to fill employer openings and there needs to be a match between the skills in the available talent pool and the needs of employers.

From year to year, the size of the labor force and the total number of employed fluctuate. While the unemployment rate was its highest in 2010, the number of people in the labor force and who were employed increased significantly from 2009. By 2010, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act had introduced programs and policies to catalyze the national economy. The size of the Franklin County labor force grew to greater than pre-recession levels and the number of employed increased greatly too compared to the previous year. Starting in 2014, the county’s and CEDS Region’s levels of total employment began to grow consistently from year to year to the highest employment level in twenty years.

From 2017 to 2018, the size of the labor force and total number of employment have increased. As seen in Figures 4 and 5, both the labor force and number of employed in Franklin County increased by 4%. In 2018, the labor force totaled 41,365 in Franklin County and 67,889 in the CEDS Region; and the number of employed was 40,115 in Franklin County and 65,765 in the CEDS Region. For Franklin County and the CEDS Region, the 2018 labor force and employment levels are the highest level in the past ten years. During this time frame, the state’s and nation’s labor force increased by over 3% and employment level increased by over 1%.

Often increases in the labor force are attributed to population or job growth or changes in labor force characteristics, such as people re-entering the workforce due to economic need, cohorts of younger people entering the workforce and/or older people in the
workforce delaying retirement. The most recent demographic data for Franklin County indicate a decline in population and an aging population. It may be assumed that growth in the labor force is due to factors such as new job creation and more people re-entering or remaining in the workforce. 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.

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

![Labor Force and Employment Level](image)


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

![Labor Force and 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 than 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 non-profits, government or are self-employed are much higher. Factors specific to this region and the state contribute to why these classes are more prevalent.

Past studies have demonstrated the large role the non-profit sector plays in the state. A 2005 study by MassInc reported 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 services 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.
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 the self-employed or people who want to be self-employed with launching new ventures. As advances in access to broadband are made and village centers 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 other costs that are higher here, such as for heating and transportation. 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 income levels for Franklin County, Massachusetts, and the United States](image)


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 earnings per job data are available from the federal Bureau of Economic Analysis. As the title indicates, it is the total

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amount of annual wages earned in a geographic area divided by the number of jobs in that area. As of 2017, the average earnings per job in Franklin County was $44,635, compared to the state’s $73,246 and nation’s $60,660. Franklin County has consistently had a lower average wage per job than both the state and nation. In comparison to the other fourteen counties in Massachusetts, Franklin County has had the lowest average earnings per job since 2002.

**Figure 7: Average Earnings Per Job for Massachusetts Counties, 2017**

![Average Earnings Per Job for Massachusetts Counties, 2017](image)

Source: U.S. Commerce Department, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Economic Profile, April 2019

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.¹⁰ This calculator estimates that for a Franklin County adult to support himself/herself, a living wage would be $12.67 per hour. For a family of two working adults with two children, the calculator estimates a living wage of $16.84 per hour for each adult. For a single parent household with two children, it estimates $31.08 per hour as the living wage to support the family. In comparison, the current minimum wage in Massachusetts is $12.00 per hour, which went into effect on January 1, 2019.

Key Industries & Clusters
The key industries identified in the 2015 CEDS 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 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, there were 20,265 employees in Franklin County in 2016, a 0.8% increase from the previous year and a 3.3% increase from 2014. This level of private-sector establishment employment is the highest since 2010, but not to pre-recession levels of employment, which was over 22,000 in 2008. According to this data, there were 1,583 establishments, one more than the previous year. The total annual payroll for 2016 for these establishments was over $823 million, a 1.3% increase from the previous year. The increases in total employment and annual payroll for Franklin County were consistent with the experience at the statewide and national level.

Table 1: Top Private-Sector Industries by Employment, 2016

<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 Employed</td>
<td>% of Total Employed</td>
<td>Average Payroll per Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare &amp; Social Assistance</td>
<td>3,761 (↑)</td>
<td>18.6% (↑)</td>
<td>$36,588 (↓)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>3,659 (↑)</td>
<td>18.1% (↔)</td>
<td>$53,034 (↑)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>2,956 (↓)</td>
<td>14.6% (↓)</td>
<td>$30,058 (↑)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodations &amp; Food Services</td>
<td>2,040 (↓)</td>
<td>10.1% (↓)</td>
<td>$16,320 (↑)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Services</td>
<td>1,425 (↑)</td>
<td>7.0% (↑)</td>
<td>$45,349 (↑)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, County Business Patterns, 2016

*Data source only includes private-sector employer establishments, and as a result does not include government or self-employed workers.

Key: The following symbols indicate the direction of change from the previous year’s statistics.
   (↑) = Increase; (↓) = Decrease; (↔) = No change

According to 2016 County Business Patterns, the private-sector industry in Franklin County that employed the largest number of people was Healthcare & Social Assistance Services, 18.6% of the total employment in this data set. Healthcare & Social Assistance Services gained 450 employees from 2015 and overtook Manufacturing as

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11 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), www.census.gov/econ/cbp/index.html
the leading private sector industry in employment. 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. The percentage of employment in Franklin County in this industry is lower than the state’s rate and higher than national rate. Trends indicate this industry will continue to grow as the population ages, requiring greater services.

The second largest private-sector industry in employment was Manufacturing with 3,659 employees or 18.1% of total employment in this data set. This percentage of manufacturing employment is over 2.5 times the state rate and nearly twice the national rate. While the number employed in manufacturing in 2016 is significantly less than it was ten years ago, there are signs of strength. According to this data source, the portion of employment in Manufacturing has consistently been over 18% of the total employment. In addition, Franklin County’s percentage of Manufacturing employment is consistently greater than the other 13 counties in Massachusetts that have data available. According to annual payroll information associated with this data set, the Manufacturing industry has a high average pay per employee ($54,020) of the nineteen industries with information available for Franklin County. The annual payroll amount has increased each year, even as the number of establishments and employment levels fluctuated. From 2012 to 2016, the number of establishments increased by twelve firms, the number of employees increased by 127 workers, and the annual payroll increased by $37 million. This annual payroll figure indicates that there are increases in wages being offered, and not just as the result of more employees being added to the sector.

Figure 8: Franklin County Manufacturing Industry Employment*

![Bar chart showing manufacturing employment from 2007 to 2016](chart.png)

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, County Business Patterns, 2007-2016
*Data source only includes private-sector establishments with five or more employees, and as a result does not include government or self-employed workers. Also, please note that NAICS definitions for manufacturing and other industries were revised in 2007 and 2012.
The Retail Trade industry and Food & Accommodations industry are 25% of the total employment in this data set for Franklin County. These 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 educational institutions). A significant part of this industry is the independent, private K-12 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. This Census is conducted every five years, with the most recent one occurring in 2017. As this data has not yet been released, only the data from 2012 is available. From the 2002 to 2012, the number of farms increased by 33% (from 586 to 780) and the amount of land in farms 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. 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. More information about this sector is expanded upon in the FRCOG’s Franklin County Farm and Food System Project report.

The U.S. Census Bureau produces statistics for non-employer establishments, which is a firm that has no paid employees and annual business receipts of $1,000 or more. Most of these establishments are self-employed individuals, which may or may not be their primary source of income. In 2016, there were 6,112 non-employer establishments.

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12 Land in farms includes cropland, woodland, pastureland/rangeland as well as house lots, ponds, roads.
13 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).
that had total annual receipts of over $227 million\textsuperscript{15}. In comparison to the same year’s County Business Pattern data for private-sector employers, there were 1,583 establishments with total annual payroll of $823 million in 2016. The industries with the greatest number of non-employer establishments are: Professional, scientific & technical services (17%); Construction (13%); Other Services (12%); Arts, entertainment & recreation (10%); and Health care and social assistance (9%). In the past decade, the number of non-employer establishments has fluctuated by 5%, with a peak of 6,224 in 2009 and a low of 5,922 in 2013.

A list of the major employers (see following table) is indicative of the high employment industries found in the 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>
<tr>
<td>Walmart Supercenter</td>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>250 – 499</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MA Department of Workforce Development, Infogroup 2018

A large scale layoff or closure of an employer has an obvious direct impact to the dislocated workers and can also have an indirect effect to related businesses or the level of general economic activity in the region. As seen with the discontinuing of energy generation activities and decommissioning of the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Facility in Vernon, VT, the loss of over 600 jobs direct jobs has a rippling effect in the regional economy. The Rodney Hunt Company, a manufacturer of water control devices, closed in 2016 resulting in the loss of over 200 jobs in Orange. Other

\textsuperscript{15} U.S. Census Bureau, Nonemployer Statistics, \url{www.census.gov/econ/nonemployer/index.html}
manufacturers in the region benefited from hiring some of these skilled employees that were laid off. Within a year, the facility was purchased by an international firm who re-opened it at a smaller scale. Not all of the 37-acre site and over 234,000 square feet of industrial space is in active use and could be used by other manufacturers.

The Turners Falls Paper Company in Montague closed in August 2017, which resulted in the loss of approximately 60 jobs. The company announced bankruptcy and a new owner is sought for the property. The mill is located in the historic canal district in Downtown Turners Falls. The closure of the Turners Falls Paper Company marked the loss of the last major employer located in the historic canal district.

In spring 2019, it was announced that Channing Bete Company, a publications company serving the public health, community safety and human services fields, would close by June 2019. The company was reported to employ 105 people and owns a 100,000 square foot facility in Deerfield. Also in spring 2019, the Redemption Christian Academy closed its 126-acre school campus in Northfield. Future plans for the site are unknown at this time.

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, 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. The 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 the relative strengths of national clusters. As found on StatsAmerica.org, the Industry Clusters browser provides employment, establishment and wage data on a per county basis for 17 defined clusters (including six manufacturing sub-clusters).

16 The Greenfield Recorder, “Channing Bete to close June 30”, April 10, 2019
18 For more information: www.isc.hbs.edu/competitiveness-economic-development/frameworks-and-key-concepts/Pages/clusters.aspx
19 Innovation in America Regions project, by the Purdue Center for Regional Development at Indiana University. www.statsamerica.org/innovation/anydata
In addition to total figures, it 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 that want to find skilled labor in that field or may encourage a new start up to fill a niche within that cluster.

Clusters that had the highest employment location quotient were mostly manufacturing related. The clusters identified were not necessarily the largest employers, but had a high concentration of employment in that cluster in comparison to the national average. The most recent information is from 2012 data sources from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages.

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>

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) and University of Indiana’s Purdue Center for Regional Development, Innovation Data Browser, 2012

Another EDA funded online tool, called the U.S. Cluster Mapping Project\(^\text{20}\), has created 16 definitions for “local” cluster (primarily only serves the local market) and 51 definitions for “traded” clusters (serves markets outside of the region), and measures their strength in comparison to other areas across the country. This online tool uses data from the U.S. County Business Patterns and other sources, which is updated annually with the most recent figures available. Using 2016 industry data, it has determined that 14,335 workers were employed in local clusters and 8,379 were employed in traded clusters. In comparison to 2015, these figures are a -2% decline in traded cluster employment and a 3% increase in local cluster employment. Using 2016 industry data, the tables below identifies the top local and traded clusters by employment in Franklin County.

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\(^{20}\) U.S. Cluster Mapping Project: [www.clustermapping.us](http://www.clustermapping.us)
Table 4: Top Local Clusters with Highest Employment Level, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Cluster</th>
<th>Franklin County Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Health Services</td>
<td>3,011 (↑)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Hospitality Establishments</td>
<td>2,217 (↓)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Education and Training</td>
<td>1,429 (↑)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Real Estate, Construction, and Development</td>
<td>1,279 (↑)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Community and Civic Organizations</td>
<td>1,228 (↑)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Food &amp; Beverage Processing and Distribution</td>
<td>1,048 (↓)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Motor Vehicle Products and Services</td>
<td>856 (↔)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Logistical Services</td>
<td>588 (↑)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Commercial Services</td>
<td>543 (↓)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Personal Services (Non-medical)</td>
<td>503 (↓)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Cluster Mapping, Traded Clusters, April 2019

Key: The following symbols indicate the direction of change from the previous year’s statistics.

(↑) = Increase; (↓) = Decrease; (↔) = No change

Local clusters that gained the most employees over the past year are Local Health Services (with a gain of 366 employees or a 14% increase) and Local Community and Civic Organizations (with 215 employees or 21%). Local clusters that lost the most employees over the year are Local Food and Beverage Processing and Distribution (with a loss of 87 jobs or -8% change), Local Commercial Services (with a loss of 85 jobs or -14%), Local Entertainment and Media (with a loss of 50 jobs or -22%) and Local Hospitality Establishments (with a loss of 44 jobs or -2%).

Table 5: Top Traded Clusters with Highest Employment Level, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traded Cluster</th>
<th>Franklin County Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distribution and Electronic Commerce</td>
<td>1,357 (↑)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastics</td>
<td>1,045 (↔)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational and Small Electric Goods</td>
<td>820 (↓)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Services</td>
<td>686 (↑)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality and Tourism</td>
<td>660 (↑)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Processing and Manufacturing</td>
<td>407 (↓)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upstream Metal Manufacturing</td>
<td>395 (↔)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper and Packaging</td>
<td>360 (↔)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Technology and Heavy Machinery</td>
<td>350 (↓)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing, Design, and Publishing</td>
<td>301 (↓)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Cluster Mapping, Traded Clusters, April 2019

Key: The following symbols indicate the direction of change from the previous year’s statistics.

(↑) = Increase; (↓) = Decrease; (↔) = No change
The traded clusters gained the most employees over the past year are Metalworking Technology, which grew by 28% to have a total of 241 employees, and Hospitality and Tourism which grew by 50 jobs or an 8% increase. The traded clusters that lost the most employees over the year are Business Services (with a reduction of 200 employees or a decline of -23%) and Downstream Metal Products (with a reduction of 44 employees or a decline of -29%).

It should be noted that the title of some of clusters may not effectively describe how it is relevant to Franklin County. For example, the Distribution and Electronic Commerce cluster includes warehousing, wholesale trade, and support services. The Recreational and Small Electric Goods cluster includes establishments that manufacture “end use products for recreational and decorative purposes. These products include games, toys, bicycles, motorcycles, musical instruments, sporting goods, art supplies, office supplies, shades, and home accessories.”21 As a result, this cluster may include candle production, local artists, as well as businesses that create office supplies.

For this same period, the U.S. Cluster Mapping tool identified 6 traded clusters in Franklin County that have been evaluated to be strong due to high employment specialization in comparison to other counties across the country. Again these are not clusters with the greatest number of employees, but are traded clusters that have been evaluated to be particularly strong according to their criteria. The cluster identified as the highest ranked in comparison to other counties across the nation, (i.e. ranked #42 out of over 3,000 counties) is the Recreational and Small Electric Goods cluster. Other Massachusetts counties that are strong in this sector are Bristol and Hampden counties. See Figure 10 for a graphic of the Franklin County traded clusters identified as strong.

Figure 9: Strong Traded Clusters in 2016 in Franklin County

![Cluster Portfolio, 2016](image)

Source: U.S. Cluster Mapping, Traded Clusters, April 2019

21 U.S. Cluster Mapping Project, Cluster by Cluster Definitions (Traded), June 2014, [www.clustermapping.us](http://www.clustermapping.us)
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 define 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 services 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 5 of the 2015 CEDS Plan identified 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. It is anticipated that as the CEDS Plan is updated annually, this list may evolve to reflect new opportunities and changes in market conditions.

**Table 6: 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 – Higher Education;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Boarding Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest, Farm and Food Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Economy – Building/Construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing – Metal Products/Precision Machining;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Materials; Paper &amp; Packaging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism – Outdoor/Adventure Recreation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FRCOG, 2016

Chapter 5 highlights projects and activities that will create conditions to support key clusters, such as the creative economy; forest, farm and food production; manufacturing; and tourism. In addition to those specified in the 2015 CEDS Plan’s strategies, other projects and activities are happening in the region related to these key clusters. For example, through a successful EDA grant award, the Southern Vermont Economic Development Strategy (SeVEDS) has led a Green Economy cluster.
development project, called the Ecovation Hub. The project is seeking to make the greater tri-state region a center of excellence for green building and construction. This effort incorporates developing new business sector opportunities, promoting research and development, and inventorying educational resources, programs, sites and other assets that support the cluster.

Another significant development in this CEDS Program year is the pending reuse of the Northfield Mount Hermon School’s former campus in Northfield. The property has been vacant since the school consolidated onto their Gill campus in 2005. Two new entities will be housed on the property. Based in California, Thomas Aquinas College will open its New England campus to students in fall 2019. Over time, the College anticipates growing its enrollment up to 400 students. The Moody Center intends to open educational and event spaces, and a museum. Plans to open a conference center with hotel and an active living community are also proposed. The opening of a new college and educational center will create employment and attract additional students and visitors to Northfield and the region.

There are two significant changes at the state level that are anticipated to impact key industries and clusters in the CEDS Region. In 2011, Governor Deval Patrick signed a law to allow casino development in select locations of the Commonwealth. One casino license was awarded for the western region. The MGM Springfield casino opened in August 2018 in downtown Springfield at a cost of $980 million. According to the Massachusetts Gaming Commission, the casino has 125,000 square feet of gaming space, a 251-room hotel, multi-level parking structure and 96,000 square feet of restaurant and retail space. The project is expected to create 3,000 permanent jobs and 2,000 construction jobs.

Due in part to the casino development, additional investment in Downtown Springfield is underway or has been announced. Potential economic impacts from the casino and nearby development could range from drawing more tourists to the broader region who may visit other attractions, to creating more business opportunities for vendors to sell goods and services at an institutional scale.

Another recent state level change was the legalization of the medical use of marijuana in 2013 and the legalization of adult use recreational marijuana in 2016. The Commonwealth’s Cannabis Control Commission governs the licensing process of these facilities. The potential economic development impacts of these laws to the CEDS Region are unknown at this time.

22 Thomas Aquinas College website, https://thomasaquinas.edu/newengland
23 The Moody Center website, https://moodycenter.org/vision/
24 Massachusetts Gaming Commission, http://massgaming.com/about/mgm-springfield/
Project Resources

The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) encourages community based economic development projects that create or retain quality jobs and are able to leverage both public and private resources. Often the small town municipal governments and non-profit organizations of this region require funding assistance to move economic development projects forward. Similarly on the private side, businesses may require some assistance to make their projects financially feasible. The following describes some of the resources available to support economic development and business expansion projects.

Depending on specific eligibility criteria, economic development projects may apply for funding through federal programs offered by the EDA or USDA Rural Development. At the state level, municipalities can apply for infrastructure funds through MassWorks. MassDevelopment, a quasi-state agency that supports economic development in the Commonwealth, has programs available to municipalities as well as non-profits and even for-profit businesses. They offer programs that assist communities with site pre-development, brownfields clean-up and the establishment of co-working space, among other topic areas.

On the private sector side, businesses seeking to grow or new ventures starting up, access to capital is a key component. Local and regional banks in the region offer traditional commercial financing. Non-traditional lenders, like the Franklin County Community Development Corporation’s lending program or Common Capital, Inc., may offer more flexible terms or can be a good source for gap financing. There are also state and federal incentive programs that, if awarded, can offset investment costs for new development. For projects proposed in areas with low real estate values or low lease rates, incentives can make a project more financially feasible to developers seeking to invest in development or the redevelopment of historic buildings.

The State’s Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP) allows private ventures and local municipalities to negotiate a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) agreement, which is a local property tax discount on new development over a specific period of time, pending State approval. Eligible projects may also apply for state tax incentives as well, which also require approval of the State.

Tax credit programs allow a developer to lower the amount of taxes owed or raise capital for a project. There are tax credit programs available for historic rehabilitation projects, brownfield projects, and low income housing. The New Market Tax Credit

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25 For more information about the EDIP, go to https://www.mass.gov/service-details/economic-development-incentive-program-edip
program is operated by the U.S. Department of Treasury and managed by participating Community Development Financial Institutions (CFDI). A CFDI can allocate federal tax credits to certified organizations for specific projects located in eligible Census Tracts. Tax credit programs are complex to navigate but can be a helpful resource for capital for large projects.

A new program emerged from the federal U.S. Tax Cut and Jobs Act of 2017. It is not an incentive program, but instead proposes to encourage private investment into economically distressed communities. As described by the Internal Revenue Service, the Opportunity Zone program allows individuals to defer taxable income from capital gains by investing those gains into an Opportunity Fund. The Opportunity Fund is a private partnership or corporation that invests in projects or businesses located in designated Opportunity Zone areas.

In 2018, local governments with eligible low income Census Tracts were allowed to apply to their respective State governments for nomination to the federal Opportunity Zone Program. With the assistance of the FRCOG, several Franklin County municipalities applied to the Baker-Polito Administration for this designation. In total, fourteen municipalities in the CEDS Region had Census Tracts nominated for designation. In May 2018, the U.S. Treasury Department certified these nominated Census Tracts as Opportunity Zones.

Map 5: Certified Opportunity Zones in the CEDS Region
Source: FRCOG; May 2018

26 For more information about NMTC program, go to https://www.cdfifund.gov/programs-training/Programs/new-markets-tax-credit/Pages/default.aspx
27 For more information about the Opportunity Zone program, go to https://www.cdfifund.gov/Pages/Opportunity-Zones.aspx
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 SWOT analysis in the 2015 CEDS Plan was compiled using a variety of inputs from the CEDS Committee, one-on-one CEDS Program partner interviews, and a review of relevant plans including the 2013 Franklin County Regional Plan for Sustainable Development, which had involved an extensive public participation process. Since the 2015 CEDS Plan, the SWOT was revisited by the CEDS Committee and updated.

View from Mt. Sugarloaf of the Connecticut River and the historic Sunderland village center.
Photo credit: FRCOG, 2015
### Table 7: Strengths for Economic and Community Development

**Strengths (Region’s competitive advantages)**

- Proximity and access to major markets via Interstate 91 and Route 2, and freight and passenger rail network
- Presence of two general aviation airports in the region, and reasonable proximity to international airports
- Presence of MassBroadband123 middle-mile fiber network
- Scenic rural landscape and abundant natural resources, including forest and farmland
- Outdoor recreation assets and attractions, including unique resources such as scheduled dam releases on the Deerfield River to create whitewater conditions
- High educational attainment level for the population 25 years and over, and access to respected higher education institutions
- Presence of independent schools and colleges in the area
- Expanding healthcare and social assistance sector, with investments in new facilities and leadership in addressing substance use disorders
- Growth in highly skilled manufacturing employment opportunities in the region
- Strong manufacturing clusters in plastics, machining, and advanced materials
- Successful skills training programs established for manufacturing, healthcare, and renewable energy/energy efficiency industries
- Strong organizational assets in renewable energy/energy efficiency industry
- Access to entrepreneurial and small business development assistance
- 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)
- Strong interest in “buy local” efforts
- Creation of new community-financed lending programs for businesses, such as the PV Grows Investment and the Community First Fund
- Historic and cultural attractions, and acclaimed arts and culture community
- Founding of young professionals group in region
- Local governments and regional organizations’ ability to work collaboratively
- Robust and integrated emergency preparedness and first responder community
- An established regional cooperative framework that successfully forwards disaster resilient, community-based initiatives and projects
- Regional designation as an Economic Development District
- MA Green Community designation of 27 CEDS Region towns
- Opportunity Zone designation of seven Census Tracts located in 12 towns
Table 8: Weaknesses for Economic and Community Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weaknesses (Region’s relative competitive disadvantages)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Recent demographic trends factor into projections that predict a decline in the population in the near future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Older overall population, resulting in a large segment of the workforce and of business owners approaching retirement age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Lower average wage per job than compared to other regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Need for more job opportunities, and job opportunities that pay a competitive, living wage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Lower percent of residents working in private for-profit enterprises, than compared to state and nation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Many areas without last mile 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>7. Areas in region with limited cell phone service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Low inventory of developable industrial land in center of region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. High transportation costs and limited access to public transit services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Inadequate funding for transportation, increasing costs, and the decline in student population are creating significant challenges for funding rural public school districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Higher energy costs, compared to other regions in the country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. High cost to redevelop historic downtown structures and historic mill buildings, which cannot be recouped by current real estate market values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Village centers with limited or no access to public water and/or sewer systems, which is limiting commercial enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Limited available capacity and resources for municipalities to pursue economic development projects and invest in infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Limited employment opportunities for youth and young adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Limited availability of affordable, quality child care and early education services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Shortage of housing affordable to households with middle incomes and very low incomes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9: Opportunities for Economic and Community Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities (Potential positive impacts from outside the region)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Access to higher educational institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Availability of former Northfield Campus for redevelopment as an academic institution or similar campus use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Connections to industries and resources that broaden business development eco-system, such as Valley Venture Mentors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Growth of regional networks that are enhancing food systems and the creative economy, such as PV Grows and the PV Creative Economy Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ MassBroadband 123 fiber network and state funds committed to invest in last mile infrastructure in unserved areas in western Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Interest in enhancing passenger rail services along the Knowledge Corridor/Connecticut River Main Line corridor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Relative resiliency of small business sector, as demonstrated in the Pioneer Valley Growth Small Business Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Strength of non-profit sector and Education &amp; Knowledge Creation cluster in Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Interest in forging a partnership to create a new model of forestland conservation, municipal financial stability and sustainable natural resource based economic development in western Franklin County.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Expansion of Green Economy Cluster Development Initiative to greater Franklin County region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Strengthening of inter-regional collaborations, such as the Tri-State Region efforts with southeastern Vermont and southwestern New Hampshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats (Potential negative impacts from outside the region)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Given the difference in the economies of scale to implement programs and projects in rural areas, as opposed to more urban or suburban areas, the region is often at a disadvantage when applying for and executing state and federal programs that do not take rural challenges into consideration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge to maintain funding for programs, such as career education and school-to-youth programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty of public funding levels that may impact services, infrastructure investment and employment in government and non-profit sectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External ownership of existing major employers or threat of external ownership as business owners retire and their firms are acquired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge to attract and retain young professionals and young families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of understanding of manufacturing career opportunities and limited availability of skilled workforce to fill advanced manufacturing jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited recognition of Franklin County as a destination for business and tourism, in comparison to other regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of jobs and economic activity due to decommissioning of Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More frequent severe weather events and their impacts to regional assets and economic activity</td>
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Chapter 4: Economic Resilience

The EDA and the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) describe economic resilience as the ability to recover quickly from a shock, the ability of a region or community to anticipate, withstand, and bounce back from a shock or disruption.\(^{28}\) When a disaster strikes, the health and safety of people and the protection of property are paramount concerns. This Chapter references the emergency response role to address these important public safety concerns. However, public safety is not this Chapter’s primary focus. This Chapter focuses on immediate and long term impacts and actions that support the economy, which directly relates to the well-being of people and the region as a whole.

Economic shocks or disruptions can be caused by natural disasters, man-made disasters, or significant shifts to the economy. The following table lists various shocks or disruptions that could greatly impact the region and its economy if they were to occur. Some of these vulnerabilities would impact a broad geographic area (such as a hurricane), while others would be more site specific (such as a hazardous materials spill). The most frequently experienced disasters in the region, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), are flooding and severe winter storms.

Table 11: Types of Vulnerabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural Disaster</th>
<th>Man-made Disaster</th>
<th>Economic Shifts</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dam Failure</td>
<td>Tornado</td>
<td>Major recession</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drought</td>
<td>Wildfire</td>
<td>Closure of a major employer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Earthquake</td>
<td>Winter Storm</td>
<td>Decline in a significant industry or cluster</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td></td>
<td>Substantial decline in total labor force</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flood</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hurricane</td>
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<tr>
<td>Landslide</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Biological Threat (such as a pandemic)</th>
<th>Chemical Threat</th>
<th>Radiation and Nuclear Threat</th>
<th>Other Hazardous Material Threat</th>
<th>Active Threat (such as terrorism, domestic or foreign)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Sources: FEMA, NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, and FRCOG.

Approaches to mitigate or quicken recovery vary based on the different types of disasters or disruptions. For example, local hazard mitigation planning can identify infrastructure needs that, if improved, can lessen the impact of a natural disaster. A hazard mitigation plan may identify a culvert as being too small. The plan may recommend replacement with a larger culvert that is less likely to be congested by debris and can accommodate greater water flow, which will reduce the impact of flooding during a hurricane or other extreme rain event. As another example, economic development planning can recommend actions to reduce the dominance of a single industry. By increasing the diversity of businesses in the region, the loss of employment due to the closure of a major employer or a significant decline in an important industry could be absorbed by growth in other sectors.

Current Activities
While approaches may vary, the overall structure that plans, responds and recovers from a disruption should be unified. Fortunately, there is an active and robust community of people and organizations working on responsive (short term initiatives that seek to respond and assist recovery following an event) and steady-state (long term efforts to help regions withstand, avoid or recover from an event) initiatives. This structure is in place, and has established a framework that is well prepared and continuously identifying ways to improve and enhance skills. The regional structure is led primarily by two programs of the FRCOG, the Regional Preparedness Program (RPP) and the Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council (WRHSAC). A key characteristic to the success of these programs is their ability to coordinate and collaborate with many groups and organizations, and across multiple sectors and jurisdictions.

The WRHSAC has implemented an impressive range of initiatives to plan and be prepared for emergencies and to support first responders and emergency personnel across western Massachusetts. This work requires significant outreach, collaboration, and the creation of resources, such as the WesternMassReady.org website. They have implemented a series of workshops and exercises that draw participants from across the region and the Northeast. The event topics have ranged from active shooter threat awareness, to addressing the needs of children in disasters, to mental health first aid training, to responding to a passenger rail mass casualty incident. Events are open to emergency responders as well as other key stakeholders from the public and private sector that would benefit from this expertise.

The RPP works on public health, emergency management, communication systems, and volunteer training for emergency response. The RPP also manages the Western Massachusetts Health and Medical Coordinating Coalition (HMCC), which coordinates emergency preparedness for public health and medical entities across four counties. An important function of this Program is their coordination of the Franklin County Regional
Emergency Planning Committee (REPC), which has representatives across public safety, public health, municipal government, and industry sectors. A current activity of the REPC is to establish a Multi Agency Coordination Center that would enhance coordination, more efficiently share resources, and employ a regional approach to emergency management in times of disasters. In addition, the REPC identifies ways to mitigate impacts. In 2018, RPP staff coordinated a workshop for local industry on how to prevent their hazardous materials from being washed downstream in a flood event.

In addition to the work of the RPP and WRHSAC, the FRCOG Planning & Development Department encompasses multiple programs that participate in this structure. The Planning Department has programs for economic development planning, land use and natural resources planning, and transportation planning. Planning Department staff conduct work at the local level by assisting individual member municipalities and at a broader scale on watershed-based or region-wide plans. Both the 2013 Franklin County Regional Plan for Sustainable Development and the 2015 CEDS Plan highlighted sustainable planning practices to address the environmental, social and economic needs of the region without compromising the future for succeeding generations. This vision is infused in the ongoing planning work of the FRCOG.

In 2017, staff began providing technical assistance to select municipalities as part of the State’s Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program29. The MVP Program helps municipalities complete vulnerability assessments and resiliency planning to address the impacts of a changing climate. Workshops are held to identify vulnerabilities and risks from extreme weather and climate related hazards, and to prioritize actions for the community to undertake. To date, seven Franklin County municipalities have achieved MVP Program designation and one is current participating.

In 2019, Planning Department staff published the Commonwealth’s first watershed-based climate change resiliency plan. A Framework for Resilience30 focuses on the 14-town region of Franklin County in the Deerfield River Watershed. The Plan reviews the stressors from climate changes, such as changes in precipitation (including both flooding and droughts), rising temperatures and extreme weather events, and how they impact natural resources, human health and the local economy and infrastructure. The watershed-based approach allows for an economical and efficient way to address infrastructure needs.

All twenty-six Franklin County municipalities have a local Hazard Mitigation Plan, which reviews potential hazards and identifies mitigation goals and actions. Starting in 2019, Planning Department staff will work with sixteen of these towns to update their

community-based plans. These plans will be reviewed by MEMA and FEMA for approval.

Using the lens of economic development related to the mitigating impacts of disasters, two particular projects in the 2015 CEDS Plan were identified and have since moved forward. They are: the FCCDC’s shared cold storage facility and the Town of Monroe’s former Ramage Paper Mill’s wood structure, see Strategy 8 in Chapter 5 for more information.

**Economic Resilience Action Plan**

Chapter 5 of this Annual Report states the goals from in the 2015 CEDS Plan and provides updates on activities undertaken. Included in these goals is Strategy 7, which seeks to support the ability of individual establishments and the economy to be resilient in case of future economic disruptions. Strategy 7 will remain as a goal in Chapter 5 and will also be reflected in elements of this Economic Resilience Action Plan.

The Economic Resilience Action Plan proposes an expanded role for the FRCOG Economic Development Planning Program that will complement existing efforts and be incorporated, as appropriate, into the overall emergency preparedness structure. This role is specific to the economic aspects of planning, responding and recovering from a disruption. The role of the Economic Development Planning Program will primarily be as a resource and a convener of regional business and economic development entities. The Economic Development Planning Program staff will implement the following strategies over a two year period and in preparation for the 2020 CEDS Plan.

**Strategy A:** To support FRCOG Regional Preparedness Program (REP) with engaging the business community in the emergency preparedness framework through the following activities.

1. Assist employers in encouraging their workers to be prepared for a 72-hour period during disaster events, so that they can return to work quickly. This period is particularly vital for businesses that provide important goods and services people may need immediately after a disaster event.

2. Urge businesses to participate in the regional Community Organizations Active in Disasters (COAD) group. The COAD group was created by the RPP and now sustains themselves independently. The COAD brings together non-profit agencies, businesses, and faith-based organizations who want to assist during an emergency, but are not part of the formal emergency response structure.

3. Provide guidance and support for businesses and private organizations of all sizes to create a Continuity Of Operations Plan (COOP). A business having a
COOP in place increases the likelihood for that business to withstand an event or recover from an event more quickly.

Strategy B. Incorporate local and regional planning efforts related to resiliency into CEDS planning activities.

1. Identify local and regional plans that contain important content that addresses economic resiliency.

2. Review plans, such as local hazard mitigation plans, MVP Program outcomes and the Regional Transportation Plan, to select findings that should be incorporated into the Annual Reports and the 2020 CEDS Plan, as appropriate.

Strategy C. To facilitate and strengthen the connection of key economic development organizations into the economic resiliency framework.

1. Request Franklin Regional Economic Development Initiative (FREDI) members inventory their own and their partner organizations’ resources available to plan, respond and recover from disasters and other economic disruptions.

2. Identify any gaps in resources, and determine how resources could be incorporated into the overall emergency preparedness structure that responds to disasters and/or into a new structure that directly addresses disruptions caused by significant economic shifts.

3. In cooperation with participating FREDI members and related partners, draft an agreement that outlines actions and entities responsible when a significant economic shift event may happen.

The outcomes of these action items will be built upon in the 2020 CEDS Plan. Part of the outreach process to develop the 2020 CEDS Plan will include soliciting input on how best to address local and regional emergency economic planning.

Measuring Economic Resilience
In addition to specific risks, the EDA recommends economic development planners evaluate their region’s resilience by measuring how 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 created an online tool called the Resilience Capacity Index (RCI) which summarized a region’s status based on multiple factors that “influence the ability of a region to bounce back from a future unknown stress.”

31The University of California Berkeley’s Institute of Governmental Studies – Building Resilient Regions.
distributed and the diversity of economic activity, among other factors. The Index score indicated how well a metropolitan area might respond to a future stress. A ranking of 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.”

**Map 6: Resilience Capacity Index (RCI) Map of Metropolitan Regions**

![Map of Metropolitan Regions](image_url)

For the metropolitan Springfield, MA area (which includes Franklin County and Amherst of the CEDS Region), the risk was MEDIUM and ranked 152 out of 361 metropolitan areas across the country. The Springfield area is surrounded to the east, west and south by regions evaluated to have an RCI of HIGH or VERY HIGH. For the Springfield area, the factors that contributed to a lower score related to regional affordability, business environment, disability, poverty, and homeownership. 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.

As of 2019, the Resilience Capacity Index was no longer published by the University of California Berkeley’s Institute of Governmental Studies.

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32 The RCI rankings of the 351 metropolitan areas in the country range from 1 for Very High to 351 for Very Low.
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 related activities. This is a list of these organizations’ acronyms. If the organization is from outside of Massachusetts, the home state is indicated.

BDCC – Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (VT)
BRPC – Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
CA – Community Action Pioneer Valley
EDA – United States Economic Development Administration
EDC – Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts
EOEEA - Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs
EOHED – Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development
EPA – United States Environmental Protection Agency
FACP – Fostering Arts & Culture Project
FCCC – Franklin County Chamber of Commerce
FCCDC – Franklin County Community Development Corporation
FCRHRA – Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority
FCTS – Franklin County Technical School
FREDI – Franklin Regional Economic Development Initiative
FRCOG – Franklin Regional Council of Governments
FRTA – Franklin Regional Transit Authority
GCC – Greenfield Community College
GFSABA – Greater Shelburne Falls Area Business Association
MassDEP – Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
MassDOT – Massachusetts Department of Transportation
MBA – Montague Business Association
MBI – Massachusetts Broadband Institute
MHFHCC – MassHire Franklin Hampshire Career Center
MHFHWB - MassHire Franklin Hampshire Workforce Board
MLPs – Municipal Light Plants
MRPC – Montachusett Regional Planning Commission
NATABA – Northfield Area Tourism And Business Association
NQCC – North Quabbin Chamber of Commerce
PVCEN – Pioneer Valley Creative Economy Network
PVPC – Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
SWRPC – Southwest Region Planning Commission (NH)
UMDI – University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute
WRC – Windham Regional Commission (VT)
Chapter 5: Strategies and Action Items

As part of the development of the 2015 CEDS Plan, 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.

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 were 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.

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 the 2012 report 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. Programs launched to promote manufacturing and agriculture have been particularly successful in connecting people and industry through skills development. It is important for 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.

The Baker-Polito Administration launched an initiative called the Workforce Skills Cabinet for the purpose of better aligning workforce development, economic development and the education system to meet the current and future needs of workers and businesses. Using this framework, MHFHWB and the workforce board for Hampden County established a planning team of regional stakeholders in 2017, which included representatives from Franklin County based entities, including GCC, FRCOG, MHFHCC, Mohawk Trail Regional School District, and the duMont/Hassey Savage Company. Through an inclusive planning process, a new five-year plan was created. Released in 2018, the Pioneer Valley Regional Labor Market Blueprint identifies priority industries and occupations.

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and sets out goals, strategies and mutually reinforcing activities. The strategies and actions included in the Blueprint will be part of the planning process to create the 2020 CEDS Plan.

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 MHFHWB’s Manufacturing Market Manager/Coach position. The Franklin County area’s Manufacturing Outreach Project ensures that relationships to manufacturers continue; training needs and curriculum are kept up-to-date; coaching of promising candidates occurs, and new job opportunities are identified and promoted.

   - **Lead and Partners:** MHFHWB, MHFHCC 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

   - **Update:** The Middle Skills Manufacturing Initiative is now called the Manufacturing Skills Initiative (MSI). According to Andrew Baker, MHFHWB Special Projects Coordinator, within the past six years, the MSI program has enrolled a total of 139 students in the 12-week CNC Operator Training program and graduated 130 students, a 94% completion rate. Of these graduates, 119 have been placed in training-related jobs, which is an 86% placement rate. In recent years, this job placement rate increased to 90%, demonstrating steadily improving screening for readiness and occupational fit. The overall average starting wage for graduates is $15.88 per hour.

   A 12th cohort is currently in the Spring 2019 class. With the close of this session, the number of enrollments will be over 150 and the number of program graduates at over 140 graduates.

   This Project has received support through the State’s Advanced Manufacturing Training Program. In 2016 and 2017, the FHREB received grant awards in the amount of $85,000 and $84,150, respectively.

   MassDevelopment has sought to expand interest in the industry through the “AMP It Up!” program which provides resources to promote advanced manufacturing career opportunities. In partnership with GCC, MHFHCC and private employers, MHFHWB has received grants to support educational events for middle and high school students, school counselors and young job seekers.

   The Advanced Manufacturing industry and the associated supervisor, production, and quality control occupations were identified as priorities in the 2018 Pioneer
Valley Labor Market Blueprint, which identifies workforce needs and goals for the region.

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 programming 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, MHFHWB, The Literacy Project, Community Action of Franklin, Hampshire and North Quabbin Regions
   - **Products/Outcomes**: Partner participation to develop strategies.
   - **Update**: The MHFHWB has pursued with partners a variety of strategies to assist youth and adults with job readiness and improved literacy skills. The MHFHWB’s School to Career program works with schools to incorporate career development activities and connect students to jobs governed by a work-based learning plan. Their **Summer Jobs & Beyond** project helped two high-need Franklin County schools, Ralph C. Mahar Regional High School and Turners Falls High School, to develop a comprehensive continuum of career development opportunities and offer specific training opportunities to youth, (e.g. OSHA, ServSafe, CPR/First Aid). Funded by a U.S. Department of Labor grant, the project exceed goals and projected outcomes.

State and federal workforce grants secured by the MHFHWB in recent years have included sub-contracts for Adult Basic Education (ABE) Partners to develop “bridge” curricula in priority industry areas. Past efforts have focused on green jobs and science, technology, engineering and math. Current efforts on healthcare and manufacturing are underway. Past ABE students have made a successful transition to postsecondary education and/or training as a result.
These activities and others are included in the 2018 Pioneer Valley Labor Market Blueprint, which identifies the role partners have in improving the workplace literacy, career awareness and job readiness of youth and adult learners.

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. More recent formal and informal collaborations of organizations that support businesses and business growth have experienced successful outcomes through cooperation. However, additional capacity and access to advanced broadband service throughout the region are needed to create new relationships, and 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
- **Update:** The CEDS Committee will meet three times over the program year of 2018-2019. The meeting agendas included updates and discussion of CEDS Program activities, and also included guest presenters on a variety of topics. These topics included: the development of the Rural Policy Advisory Commission Plan; and the services and funding challenges of the MassHire Franklin-Hampshire Career Center. Representatives from nine municipalities and seven regional organizations participated in CEDS Committee meetings as of May 2019. Presentations about CEDS Program activities were also made to the EDD Governing Board/FRCOG Executive Committee, the Franklin Regional Planning Board during this program year, and the MassHire Franklin Hampshire Workforce Board’s Board of Directors.

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
- **Update:** In March 2019, the FCCDC and FRCOG held a summit with representatives from GSFABA, FCCC, NATABA, MBA, Greenfield Business Association, Progressive Partnership and business leaders from Ashfield, Charlemont and Turners Falls. The summit provided an opportunity for participants to meet each other; share the strengths and challenges of their respective organizations; and identify areas of common concern and opportunities. The group has continued to meet in spring 2019 to explore collaboration.

Several of these business associations also serve to promote tourism. FRCOG staff invited several of these organizations to participate in transportation planning activities to promote tourism. In particular, these groups were brought together to provide input on the Attracting Visitors by Passenger Rail to Franklin County, MA study, and the Bicycle Tourism Plan developed by the FRCOG in 2017.

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, a new **Tri-State 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\textsuperscript{34} estimated the shared economic impact of this event across the three-county will be significant. The Tri-State Region collaboration seeks to help offset pending losses in economic activity in the broader region through coordination and the leveraging of assets.

- **Actions:** Actively participate in the Tri-State 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-State Region strategy for economic development
- **Update:** In 2015, the Tri-State Region project partners held a meeting of community and business leaders in Brattleboro, VT. The purpose of this event was to bring stakeholders together to learn about the UMDI study and the regional economy. A brainstorming session on common needs and opportunities for the Tri-State Region was led by Brian Kelsey with the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO).

Later in 2015, the BDCC received an EDA grant award to pursue a Green Economy cluster development project and to support capacity building for the Tri-State initiative. The BDCC then subcontracted with the FRCOG, SWRPC, and WRC to cooperatively conduct a CEDS comparison for these three regions. The CEDS Comparison report was completed in fall 2016. The report examined socio-economic trends, and compared CEDS Plans’ missions, SWOT analyses and goals. Key findings from the report confirmed there are many shared challenges and assets. The report also proposed a framework for the four partnering agencies to coordinate.

Based on this framework, FRCOG staff continued to partner with tri-state agencies. In 2017, the regional planning agencies began exploring the linkages and gaps in their respective public transit and rail systems. The result is a FRCOG Transportation Planning task to study inter-regional transportation connections in the tri-state area that will be completed by September 2019.

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 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.

- **Lead and Partners**: FRCOG, FCCC, FHREB, GCC, PVPC, EDC
- **Products/Outcomes**: Regular participation
- **Update**: Regular participation has continued. FRCOG staff was on the planning team that coordinated the 2016 and 2018 Western Mass Developers Conferences held at the MassMutual Center in Springfield. The biennial Conference features an exhibit area and panel discussions on topics that promote development and redevelopment opportunities in the CEDS Region and throughout Western Massachusetts. Staff also was part of the planning team for the Opportunity Zone Workshop for prospective developers, investors and community leaders held on April 11, 2019 at the UMASS Center in Downtown Springfield. This workshop was the first held on the topic of federal Opportunity Zones in western Massachusetts.

B. 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
- **Update**: In 2016, Gov. Baker awarded a $200,000 Urban Agenda grant to the FCCDC in collaboration with the cities of Greenfield and North Adams to support downtown revitalization and community-based entrepreneurship. The funding from this award strengthened FCCDC efforts to connect and support businesses and entrepreneurs across the Northern Tier. The relationships forged continue to today.

The EDA recognized the strong collaborations forged through the Northern Tier Economic Resiliency Project and that continue today. The FCCDC and project partners presented it at the Economic Resilience Workshop in May 2017 in Burlington, MA. The EDA and FEMA sponsored workshop reviewed the draft National Disaster Recovery Framework and encouraged incorporating economic recovery in pre- and post-disaster response planning. The Framework “guides how federal resources will be mobilized to support states and communities as they work to prepare for and recover from economic disaster impacts.”

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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 and with municipalities supporting local investment in broadband networks, efforts 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: EOHED, MBI, Municipalities, MLPs, WiredWest, FRCOG, Cable providers, Network builders

Broadband: A Critical Infrastructure

As stated in The National Broadband Plan, “Like electricity a century ago, broadband is a foundation for economic growth, job creation, global competitiveness and a better way of life.” In areas of the CEDS Region and western Massachusetts without broadband access, not only are new economic opportunities diminished, current challenges are exacerbated. Efforts to accelerate implementation of facilities-based solutions through cooperation and leveraging resources are essential.
• **Products/Outcomes:** Infrastructure investment; Miles of wireline infrastructure deployed

• **Update:** In 2017, the Baker-Polito Administration announced a new mechanism for awarding State grant funding for the design and construction of last mile broadband networks in unserved communities. This mechanism provides more flexibility for municipal governments in selecting the technology (such as fiber-to-the-home, cable, or wireless) and model of ownership and operation that is most appropriate for their community. Through the Last Mile Broadband grants program over $8.4 million of state grants were committed for Last Mile projects in Franklin County municipalities.

As of 2019, each unserved community in Franklin County had selected a technology and model to move forward with their last mile broadband solution, see Map 3: Broadband Status of Franklin County Communities. Once built out, it is anticipated there will be three additional towns with wireless networks and nine additional towns with fiber-to-the-premise networks. The FTTP communities are working with Westfield Gas & Electric Company’s subsidiary Whip City Fiber and are at different stages of project implementation. Some of these communities anticipate their fiber networks to be operational later in 2019 or in 2020.

In April 2019, a $2.3 million award was announced to WiValley-MA to construction a wireless broadband network for four towns, including the Franklin County towns of Monroe and Hawley.

In 2016, the MBI announced an agreement with Comcast to extend cable broadband service in nine communities, including the Franklin County towns of Buckland, Conway, Montague, Northfield and Shelburne. The MBI provided a $4 million grant to Comcast to offset the costs for expanding this service to at least 96% of households in each community. The cable expansion project was completed in September 2018.

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
• **Update**: With Baker-Polito Administration’s revamped Last Mile Broadband Program, municipal officials of unserved communities decide the ownership and operation model to be used for the solution in their community. Communities could choose to own and operate their network; or own their network and outsource the operation to a vendor; or could choose to have a vendor own and operate the network in the community.

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

• **Update**: In 2015, the Town of Leverett’s Municipal Light Plant completed construction of a fiber-to-the-home network, called LeverettNet. With construction complete, the network is operational and has homes and businesses subscribing to services. This project was featured in Broadband Communities magazine’s November/December 2015 issue and awarded the Massachusetts Municipal Associations’ Innovation Award in 2016.

The Town of Greenfield created Greenfield Community Energy and Technology or GCET as the organizational entity to provide a community based internet service called GreenLight. Using a hybrid fiber-wireless network, GCET launched the pilot project in 2015 to provide free wireless internet access on Main and High Streets in downtown Greenfield.

In 2016, the Greenfield Town Council voted to borrow $5 million to establish the telecom network. Since then, GCET has expanded the hybrid fiber-wireless network to connect subscribing homes and businesses to broadband services. The network infrastructure has been deployed in most of the town and continues to be extended into areas with service gaps in the Downtown.
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

- **Update:** In 2018, FRCOG staff completed an update to the Franklin County Industrial Park Inventory. There are six planned industrial parks in five Franklin County municipalities. As of 2017, there were 115 parcels covering 703 acres, and a total assessed value of all parcels was over $102 million and over 2.9 million square feet of building space. It is estimated that there were 66 businesses located in the parks.

The Inventory divided the parcels into four categories based on its development status. Seventy-five percent of the acres in these parks were categorized as either Developed or Not For Development. Of the remaining acres, most are in parcels that have a constraint that restricts development on all or part of the parcel. Of the parcels categorized as Undeveloped-Ready, six are in private ownership and seven are owned by the industrial park developer or municipality. These seven parcels total 33.8 acres and range in size from 2 to 8 acres. Only three of the seven parcels are larger than 5 acres in size.

A review of property sales and development patterns since 2010 demonstrate considerable market interest for planned industrial park space in the region. Given the limited number of developable parcels available, the supply of industrial park land is anticipated to be exhausted within a few years. To ensure that there is a variety of spaces available to meet the future needs of manufacturing, light industry, research & development, and distribution space, the
expansion of existing or creation of new planned industrial space is needed in the region.

To determine the feasibility of future industrial park development in the Orange, the Town worked with MassDevelopment. Through MassDevelopment’s Site Readiness Program, a study was drafted by consultants to analyze sites for potential future industrial park development. An award through the 2018 round of the Site Readiness Program was made to Greenfield to explore expansion of the existing I-91 Industrial Park. The grant funds will be used to design a new road to access an adjacent parcel.

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
- **Update:** Since July 2015, the FRCOG Regional Brownfields Program conducted environmental site assessment activities on 20 properties located in the ten Franklin County towns. The amount spent on assessment activities was $201,116.50, as funded from the current EPA grant to the FRCOG.

In addition, the FRCOG administers a Brownfields Clean-up Revolving Loan Fund & Subgrant program using EPA awards to the FRCOG. Since 2015, the FRCOG has awarded subgrant funds to support three redevelopment projects.

In 2015, the FRCOG awarded a Subgrant of $114,560 to the Town of Greenfield for clean-up of the former Lunt Silversmith property. This Subgrant was matched with a $250,000 MassDevelopment grant for asbestos cleanup and hazardous materials abatement for the first phase of redevelopment. This phase of the project resulted in the investment of $5.5 million to develop a new addiction treatment facility, and created 63 new full-time jobs.
The FRCOG Brownfields Clean-up Revolving Loan Fund & Subgrant Program was closed as an active EPA contract as of January 1, 2016. After the contract close out, FRCOG was able to retain the program income received from loan repayments for use in other projects. Using these resources, FRCOG awarded a $100,000 Subgrant to the Town of Monroe in December 2016. The Subgrant funded the clean-up of hazardous substances in the wood structure of the former Ramage Paper Mill in Monroe. See Strategy #8.F. for more information about this project.

Using CDBG resources, the Town of Montague completed a streetscape project on Avenue A. Montague also completed construction of a new public parking lot on a former brownfields site. Once a vacant auto garage with hazardous substances stored on site, the property was acquired by the Town, assessed through the FRCOG Regional Brownfields Program, and cleaned up by EPA Region 1 in 2005. A youth sculpture park was featured on the site for many years. With a 2016 MassWorks award, a parking lot was constructed on the site, so as to provide parking to support redevelopment of the former Strathmore Mill.

The Strathmore Mill is part of the Turners Falls Canal District. The Town of Montague seeks to revitalize its historic industrial canal district located in downtown Turners Falls. All of the properties in the district are currently underutilized or vacant industrial properties, and in need of redevelopment. The Town has done considerable planning for the district over the years, from updating zoning regulations to ensure flexibility and a streamlined permitting process. In May 2019, the Town
received a MassDevelopment Brownfields Redevelopment Fund award to remediate the site. The Town has received expressions of interest from private developers for portions of the district, but essential infrastructure needs must be addressed first. The Town has secured funds in a State Capital Bond Bill to fund construction of a sewer extension and to replace a needed pedestrian bridge. However, to have these funds released and complete the work, an infrastructure master plan is necessary to identify and prioritize the public and private investments needed in the district, and also to address the design, engineering and permitting needs for the sewer extension and the pedestrian bridge.

The former Millers Falls International Paper (IP) Paper Mill project also seeks to redevelop a former paper mill for future industrial, commercial or mixed uses. Owned by the Town of Erving, environmental site assessment work has been completed. In May 2019, the Town of Erving received a MassDevelopment Brownfields Redevelopment Fund award to pay for remediation of the site. Next steps for the project included selected demolition of structures and design, engineering and permitting for an access roads and utilities retrofit.

A past Brownfields clean-up project, the First National Bank Building in Downtown Greenfield, was provided additional support by FRCOG in 2017. The FCCDC remediated the Bank Building of hazardous materials with a brownfields clean-up loan from the FRCOG in 2004. Since then, FCCDC secured additional resources to secure the structure and improve the façade. These efforts saved the historic building from deterioration. The FCCDC was successful in obtaining tax credits to support redevelopment attached to the site. To further the project, the FCCDC secured the commitment of the Greenfield Redevelopment Authority (GRA) to acquire ownership pending release of debts attached to the property, including the outstanding balance of the FRCOG brownfields clean-up loan. In August 2017, the EDA approved FRCOG’s request to convert the outstanding balance of the clean-up loan into a subgrant. The GRA has since acquire the Bank Building and is continuing to pursue resources to redevelop the building and return it to productive use.

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
  
  **Update**: The FRCOG Brownfields Program assisted with assessment of the site and supported a removal action undertaken by US EPA to remediate the building of hazardous materials in 2011. The property has an ongoing hazardous material remediation action that a previous owner has responsibility. In 2017, the Town used $600,000 of state resources to demolish the building. The Town is working with the previous owner to address any remaining issues before further redevelopment of the site progresses. The Town continues to work with prospective businesses interested in redeveloping the site.

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
- **Update**: A Phase I ESA report was complete for the site in 2015. The Town of Montague's Planning & Conservation Department continues to plan for a small industrial park on the site. Also to be located on the site will be a solar array and a new facility for the Town’s Department of Public Works.

v. Determine feasibility of the town-owned **Bidwell Property** in Athol 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
- **Update**: The Town of Athol continues to work toward enhance access to and from Route 2 to new commercial/industrial areas proposed for their “Job Creation Corridor” efforts. Already, a new commercial center called North Quabbin Commons was constructed in 2014 and continues to see commercial expansion. The Bidwell property is a 100-acre site on South Athol Road. The Town seeks to have improvements to Route 2 and a new interchange that would allow access to South Athol Road.

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 challenges and measures that 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.

Update: FRCOG staff met with operators and town officials to create mapping products of water and wastewater systems, as resources allowed.

To help communities enhance their existing systems or learn more about how to fund new systems, the FRCOG sponsored two workshops through the FRCOG Select Board Essential workshop series. In December 2015, the FRCOG hosted staff from the USDA Rural Development’s Massachusetts office to review the various funding programs available to communities and to answer questions. In March 2016, FRCOG sponsored a workshop on public water and wastewater system basics with the Massachusetts Rural Water Association as a featured speaker.

As part of the work FRCOG conducted on behalf of the Rural Policy Advocacy Commission in 2017, a map was created to depict municipalities that have water systems.
and/or wastewater systems or neither in their communities. The Rural Policy Advisory Commission will explore issues and policy recommendations related to water and/or wastewater systems in rural communities as part of their 2019 statewide plan.

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

   i. Building on the $73 million investment in the Connecticut 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:** Increased rail service by 2019.

   - **Update:** Through continued advocacy, funding was secured to operate expanded train service from Springfield to Greenfield. Starting in 2018, CT Rail launched the Hartford Line, a new commuter rail service connecting New Haven and Springfield. Also in June 2018, Gov. Baker announced an agreement to provide additional train service connecting Holyoke, Northampton and Greenfield to Springfield and also connect to the Hartford Line service. This expanded service on the Connecticut River Line will allow for two new southbound morning trains and two new northbound evening trains on Monday through Friday, and a new southbound morning train and northbound evening train on weekends and

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36 More detailed information about transportation is available in the 2020 Franklin County Regional Transportation Plan to be published by the FRCOG in summer 2019.
holidays. The expanded service is anticipated to start in late summer 2019 and operate for approximately a two-year period as a pilot project. If there is sufficient ridership during the pilot period, MassDOT will continue to fund the service.

FRCOG, PVPC, local cities, chambers of commerce, rail advocacy group Trains In The Valley, and other stakeholders are working to ensure that the service continues after the pilot project term. These efforts will include advocating for the service to meet the needs of riders, supporting tourism infrastructure, and marketing the availability of the service to residents, local businesses and prospective visitors.

ii. 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.
- **Update**: A Comprehensive Service Analysis (CSA) was completed in 2015 for the FRTA. Using the CSA recommendations, a simplified fare system, a revised schedule and route changes were implemented in 2016. The FRTA gathered input through a series of Community Conversations around the region and implemented changes in 2017.

By 2018, costs for transit service continued to increase while state funding remained level funded. A series of public meetings were held in the spring 2018 to gather input from riders and other stakeholders, and in the fall 2018 reductions to evening service and increased fares were implemented to balance the budget.

Given the high costs of operating traditional transit services in a rural area, new models are being explored. As described in the 2016 Franklin County Regional Transportation Plan, a concept called “microtransit” has gained in popularity across the nation. It allows a public entity to use real-time technology to provide flexible and dynamic transit services. The traditional model has buses traveling a fixed route, whether there are riders or not. A flexible service would allow the transit vehicle to adjust its route in response to real-time demand by riders. This model has the potential to increase ridership and reduce costs by only running the service when necessary.

The FRCOG and FRTA are exploring microtransit models that could be applied to Franklin County conditions. The FRTA applied for a grant in FY2020 to upgrade its dispatching software to be able to pilot a service like this. The pilot project would allow the general public to access empty seats on current demand response vehicles for same-day and
next-day transportation services. The grant would enhance current software to include scheduling online and through a mobile phone application. It is anticipated that this pilot project would open to population centers, Greenfield, Montague, Deerfield and Orange.

iii. 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.

- **Update**: In 2016, Governor Baker announced a $7.5 million grant to the Town of Greenfield for a downtown parking garage. The Town contributed $2.5 million to fund the $10 million project cost. Completed in November 2018, the parking garage supports the needs of the recently expanded Franklin County Courthouse, travelers using the passenger rail service, as well as other redeveloped properties in the Downtown Greenfield Urban Renewal District.

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\(^\text{37}\), assess the feasibility of creating a **growth-stage business incubator** that would meet the needs of growth

\(^{37}\) The Pioneer Valley Growth Business Study is available online at [www.frcog.org/program-services/economic-development-planning/](http://www.frcog.org/program-services/economic-development-planning/).
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

- **Update**: No update to report.

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

- **Update**: There are multiple programs from MassDevelopment and MA DHCD that can provide resources to support downtown revitalization. Through MassDevelopment, the Town of Orange and a team of consultants led by Union Studio completed the Downtown Orange Riverfront Revitalization Study in October 2015. The Study reviewed past plans and engaged community stakeholders to identify challenges.

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38 The Downtown Orange Riverfront Revitalization Study is available at [www.townoforange.org/Pages/OrangeMA_Planning/2015-10%20Downtown%20Revitalization.pdf](http://www.townoforange.org/Pages/OrangeMA_Planning/2015-10%20Downtown%20Revitalization.pdf).
and opportunities to forge a new vision for the Downtown. The Study included a top twelve list of high priority action steps. One key action item was to focus town activities and events into the downtown core area to support existing businesses there and inspire new business development.

Unfortunately, shortly after the release of the Study, the Rodney Hunt Company announced its closure by the end of 2015. With that closure, over 200 manufacturing sector jobs located in the downtown area were lost. An international firm purchased the facility and has resumed operations at a much smaller scale. In addition to the large scale foundry at the former Rodney Hunt site, there is another one in a Downtown former factory building now owned by Tire Barns Realty Trust. A study completed by the UMass Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning explored the feasibility of reusing a foundry facility in Downtown Orange to create an arts education center that would specialize in large scale sculpture fabrication. Titled Forging Ahead: Towards an Arts Center in North Quabbin, it states that there is evidence to support the feasibility of such a center and recommends further research.

Two projects to benefit Downtown Orange are located in the Orange Innovation Center (OIC). The OIC is a former furniture factory building that has been renovated to accommodate a variety of businesses and offers shared facilities (such as meeting room space). To support the Center’s growth, a $200,000 MassWorks award funded the design and construction of an upgraded parking lot. The upgraded lot was completed in 2018 for use by the community and OIC tenants.

Inside the OIC, a new makerspace is being developed called LaunchSpace, Inc. The LaunchSpace facility will house multiple shops for specific disciplines, such as woodworking, metalworking, fiber arts, and for skills training, like precision machining. A seed grant from MassDevelopment for $25,000 was awarded to the non-profit LaunchSpace, Inc. for predevelopment planning in 2016. In 2017, MassDevelopment awarded them $250,000 to help implement

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39 Forging Ahead: Towards an Arts Center in North Quabbin, UMass, 2016. 
the project. Additional funding for implementation is being sought from the EDA to support start-up operations.

LaunchSpace, Inc. is also working to create a new makerspace in Athol in a former school building leased from the town. The new space will house a community kitchen and co-working space. They received a $105,000 Collaborative Workspace Program grant in October 2018 to fund the replacement of the building’s heating system.

In addition to the awards to LaunchSpace, Inc., MassDevelopment has awarded other makerspace and co-working spaces in the region through their Collaborative Workspace Program. In 2017, Greenspace CoWork in Greenfield was awarded $101,782 for its first phase of buildout. The Pioneer Valley Game Developers Co-Dev Space in Greenfield was awarded $33,000 to fund equipment to be used by its members.

In 2018, the Center for Wellness opened on Main Street in Greenfield. This Center co-locates the facilities for the Community Health Center of Franklin County and the Center for Human Development (CHD) in a renovated downtown building. The new facility allows for the services of each organization to be integrated and expanded. The cost to redevelopment this historic downtown building was $6 million and included financing from a MassDevelopment bond and the use of state historic preservation tax credits. This project not only positively impacts the health and well-being of residents; it also is a significant economic development investment in the downtown.

Through its Transportation Planning Program and a public health initiative called Mass In Motion, FRCOG continues to support Complete Streets. The purpose of the Complete Streets concept is to ensure the roadways have safe access for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, as well as motorists. For example, 15 locations in the last five years have had Complete Street evaluations by FRCOG staff. Building upon this work, the Governor’s Administration encourages communities to participate in MassDOT’s Complete Streets Funding Program, which will provide

**Complete Streets’ Project Awards**

As of February 2019, over $1.2 million in state grants have been announced for pedestrian and bicycle improvement projects in the four towns of Greenfield, Montague, Sunderland and Whately.

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40 Franklin County Complete Streets Project reports are available for download from http://frcog.org/program-services/transportation-planning/.
41 MassDOT, Massachusetts Complete Streets Funding Program Participation, https://masscompletestreets.com/Map/.
resources to create a project prioritization list and conduct some implementation. Improvements to sidewalks, crosswalks and other pedestrian and bicycle amenities in downtowns and village centers can benefit the economic health of a community. A pleasant environment will encourage more people to enjoy an area and visit businesses, and may encourage entrepreneurs to locate businesses in these areas.

The State’s Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) provides technical expertise awards for downtown community and economic development projects. It is a competitive grant program open to municipalities and requires no local financial contribution. Awards were made for the following projects in 2017.

- Athol: A market analysis to foster business growth in the downtown.
- Greenfield: Schematic designs for streetscape improvements and enhanced pedestrian connections in the downtown.
- Shelburne: Parking management plan to address current and future parking needs.
- Sunderland: A branding and wayfinding program to connect the town center to local recreational attractions.

In the 2018 round, the Town of Shelburne requested assistance to build upon the recommendations of the 2017 parking management plan to develop uniform signage and parking policies for use in the Shelburne Falls Village Center. The Town of Whately also applied for the 2018 round seeking assistance for branding and wayfinding.

Through the State’s District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) award, FRCOG staff work with selected communities on local economic development planning. The goal of these projects is to foster greater economic activity in their community or in targeted areas, through activities such as community surveys or convening stakeholder groups, collecting data, and recommending business opportunities.

Community based economic development projects assisted by FRCOG and funded by the DLTA Program include the following:

- Deerfield Economic & Industrial Development Corporation (DEDIC) Industrial Park Plan Update, 2016
- Industrial Park Development/Expansion Project Resources, 2017
- Town of Conway: Resident, Visitor and Business Survey, 2017
- Town of Monroe’s Ramage Paper Wood Structure Site Project Technical Assistance, 2017-2018
- Former Millers Falls IP Papermill Site Redevelopment Project Presentation and Technical Assistance for the Town of Erving, 2018-2019
- South Deerfield Commercial Center Promotion, 2018
- Creating an Economic Development Vision for Whately, 2018
- Downtown Orange Mapping and Promotion Project, 2018

In 2019, local economic development planning projects will be conducted for Shelburne Falls Village Center and Downtown Orange.
BUSINESSES

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 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 agencies as well as other 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

- **Update:** FCCDC continued to provide direct technical assistance, seminars and information sessions to entrepreneurs seeking general guidance or for targeted sectors, such as food production. In 2019, a special workshop series on digital marketing was launched in partnership with other community development corporations and the SMBDCN. Participation in the 16-week series was free thanks to a grant for the Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation.

Entrepreneurial training in the region expanded in 2015-2016 to include a joint launch of VVM in Greenfield, co-sponsored by the FCCDC. An initial demonstration of the VVM program was held over the summer to introduce the concept to prospective participants. In November 2015, the program began a regular schedule of meetings on the first Thursday of each month in Greenfield. Over the course of six months, twelve entrepreneurial ventures were selected to
pitch their business ideas and needs to volunteer mentors that provided feedback and recommendations. The Franklin County Business Development Profile was updated in 2018 and again in 2019. The Profile offers entrepreneurs and existing businesses quick reference to key socio-economic data and entities that provide direct business development services. The Profile was shared with local business associations, chambers of commerce and municipal governments for their use when communicating with interested residents and prospective businesses.

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
- **Update**: The FCCDC administers six revolving loan funds. Most of these loan funds were established through a state or federal grant programs. The oldest loan fund was created in the 1980s and continues to revolve to support local businesses. The newest loan fund is the PV Grows Investment Fund, which was launched in 2015. The PV Grows Investment Fund specifically supports loans for ventures in the farm and food system. It is administered by the FCCDC with input loan application review to ensure mission fit conducted by the PV Grows Fund Advisory Committee. The Fund is capitalized by investments made by individuals, institutions and foundations interested in supporting the local food system.

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

**FCCDC Lending Program**

In the past program year, the FCCDC has lent over $552,000 to 10 businesses, which is leveraging over $965,000 in private investment and creating or retaining 40 jobs.
Products/Outcomes: Broad participation in workshop and networking events; increase number of Franklin County businesses participating in state contracts

Update: Local businesses are being encouraged to engage with the new MGM Springfield casino resort, which opened in 2018 in Downtown Springfield. Companies awarded a casino gaming license from the state must agree to a set level of purchasing from local businesses. Under the state legislation that allows casinos, vendors selling to their goods or services to casinos must be licensed or registered by the Massachusetts Gaming Commission. To meet this commitment, MGM Springfield hosted a vendor fair and participated in the Western Mass. Business Innovation Expo in 2017 to describe their needs and purchasing process. MGM Springfield recommends interested businesses to register with them as procurement opportunities continue to become available.

In March 2019, the US Small Business Administration held a workshop at GCC to help local businesses understand how they can sell their products or services to the federal government.

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 programing implemented
   - Update: Through funding support from the Urban Agenda grant, the FCCDC sponsored a series succession planning seminars. Held in 2017, the workshops focused on what business owners needed to know to be able to sell their business and transition it to new owners. They also extended their one-on-one counseling services to assist businesses beginning to explore this issue.

E. Explore what goods and services are sourced from outside the region that could be provided from within the region.
   - 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.
   - Lead and Partners: Greening Greenfield, the Wellspring Collaborative, Baystate Franklin Medical Center, Franklin County Sheriff’s Office, CA, GCC

42 For more information, go to the Massachusetts Gaming Commission website at https://massgaming.com/about/vendors-suppliers/.
- **Products/Outcomes**: Implementation strategy for partners

- **Update**: The Wellspring Cooperative based in Springfield has continued to its mission “to create a network of worker owned companies in inner city Springfield, Massachusetts that will provide on-the-job training, employment and wealth creation opportunities for low income and unemployed residents of the city.” In 2017, they held a panel discussion with two Franklin County based cooperatives that described how they converted from a traditional business to a worker owned-cooperative. No further action is known regarding the creation of a commercial laundry facility in Franklin County.

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

As stated by the EDA and referenced in Chapter 4, 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 integrates the needs and capacities of individual businesses with the needs and capacities of the broader economy. As described in Chapter 4, economic disruptions may be caused by natural or man-made disasters or by significant economic shifts. One example of a significant economic disruption was experienced during the Great Recession and financial system crisis that began in 2007. During such a recession, there were concerns about high unemployment, decline in the labor force, and small business access to capital. These events coupled with structural shifts to the economy, like the increase in part-time jobs and under-employment of the workforce can create stress on the local and regional economy.

As described in Chapter 4, there is an active and robust emergency preparedness community in the region. The Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council (WRHSAC) and FRCOG Emergency Preparedness Program have implemented an impressive range of planning and preparedness initiatives to support first responders and emergency personnel. This work has required tremendous engagement and collaboration building. As mentioned previously, there is also considerable work being accomplished through a regional cooperative framework that has been developed to forward disaster resilient, community-based initiatives and projects. This framework has participation by the Franklin County Conservation District, the FRCOG Planning Department, watershed associations, municipalities, and other stakeholders.

The new Action Plan in Chapter 4 outlines the efforts to be taken to better engage the economic development and business community in the current emergency preparedness system. The following action items are continued.

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43 Wellspring Cooperative website, [http://wellspring.coop/about/overview](http://wellspring.coop/about/overview).
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

**Update:** Informational materials to help businesses be prepared remain available on the www.WesternMassReady.org website. As part of the outreach to share the FRCOG’s *Franklin County Business Development Resource Guide*, FRCOG staff recommended that Town Clerks, Town Administrators and business organizations share the “Getting Back to Business” brochure with businesses in their community and have posted the information online.

After the March 2018 Franklin County Chamber of Commerce Breakfast, the FRCOG Emergency Preparedness Coordinator and the FRCOG Economic Development Planning Program Manager held an emergency preparedness workshop for businesses and organizations. The presentation included resources for general business assistance as well as business continuity planning guidance. The presentation was filmed by the local community access television station for broadcast. From this experience, FRCOG and FCCDC staff plan to hold a more in-depth workshop that would assist participants in creating a Continuing of Operation Plan (COOP) for their business or organization.

The FRCOG Economic Development Planning Program and the FRCOG Emergency Preparedness Program work continue to work collaboratively. Data is collected and shared about major employers in the region. Future venues and outreach methods are being to share important information to the business community.

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
Update: The WRHSAC staff have implemented a series of workshops and exercises that draw participants from across the region and the Northeast. The event topics have ranged from active shooter threat awareness, to addressing the needs of children in disasters, to mental health first aid training, to responding to a passenger rail mass casualty incident. Events are open to emergency responders as well as other key stakeholders from the public and private sector that would benefit from this expertise. For example, businesses, along with colleges, schools, hospitals, and public safety entities, were invited to participate in an Active Shooter Symposium coordinated by the WRHSAC and FBI Springfield Field Office in 2016. The event held in Deerfield had over 600 participants.

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

As described in both the 2015 CEDS Plan and the 2013 Franklin County Regional Plan for Sustainable Development, the 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 championing efforts to strengthen 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, with a mission “dedicated to enhancing the ecological and economic sustainability and vitality of the Pioneer Valley food system.”

A FRCOG-led initiative is the 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, BRPC, Franklin Land Trust and the MA Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) is The Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership, which is exploring sustainable, natural resource-based economic development and conservation.

A. Create business opportunities that sustainably use **local forest products or encourage forest based recreational activities** (such as wildlife viewing, fishing, hiking, or cross country skiing) to generate economic activity while maintaining the region’s rural character.

- **Actions:** Implement the projects and recommendations of the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership (MTWP) Project, such as creating business programs

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44 PV Grows website, [www.pvgrows.net](http://www.pvgrows.net).
that support forestry and recreational tourism businesses, marketing of local wood products, and funding for outdoor recreation infrastructure improvements.

- **Lead and Partners:** FRCOG, BRPC, MA EOEEA, Franklin Land Trust
- **Products/Outcomes:** Support of forestry and recreational businesses
- **Update:** As described in the MTWP Project summary, the purpose is to bring recognition and additional financial and technical resources to 21 municipalities in northwest Massachusetts, primarily through special designation by the State. The MTWP Advisory Committee specified the goals for the project as follows:
  - To increase economic development related to forestry and natural resource based tourism;
  - To support forest conservation on private lands and the use of sustainable forestry practices; and
  - To improve fiscal stability and sustainability of the municipalities.

Project team members met with 20 of the 21 towns’ Select Boards to discuss the project. With letters of support provided by most of the towns, legislation was filed with the State legislature in 2017 to establish a Special Designation for the MTWP project region. The State legislation passed in summer 2018. Presently, each town has the opportunity to “opt in” to formally join the MTWP through a vote by their Select Board, Mayor or Town Meeting. At least 11 of the 21 towns must opt before the MTWP Board can be established.

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 and cold storage facility). Efforts to connect locally grown and processed foods to large institutions (such as colleges, public schools, hospitals and others) has been successful and will be expanded.

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- **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

- **Update**: Facility improvements completed at the Western Mass. Food Processing Center have expanded opportunities for local food producers. In 2014, the installation of individual quick freeze equipment allows for slightly processed produce to be frozen quickly and packaged in a way preferred by customers.

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**: As of 2015, there was limited cold storage space in the region, with some farmers and food producers transporting produce from Franklin County to Hampden County for storing and transporting it back for processing. A study to identify users and their needs and a location for a facility is to be conducted.

- **Lead and Partners**: PV Grows, FCCDC, FRCOG

- **Outcomes**: Feasibility study completion

- **Update**: To accommodate the volume of frozen products being made at the Western Mass. Food Processing Center, the FCCDC had five commercial freezer containers in its parking lot. Recognizing this inefficiency and the needs of neighboring food producers for cold storage, the FCCDC constructed a new large freezer and cold storage facility as part of the Food Processing Center in

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**FCCDC Western Mass. Food Processing Center’s Cold Storage and Freezer Project**

Photos: Grand opening event in November 2017 (above) and view of facility in May 2018 (right).
2017. The facility significantly increases storage capacity and eases the loading and unloading of pallets. The facility was completed in fall 2017 with financing and grant funds for the project have come from USDA Rural Development, MassDevelopment, and private sources. In addition to FCCCDC Food Processing Center clients, independent food producers, who spun off from the Center and located nearby, will be anchor tenants in the new facility.

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
- **Update:** In fall 2015, the FRCOG completed the Franklin County Farm & Food System Project plan with funding from the Henry P. Kendall Foundation and linked to the New England Food Vision. The Plan includes research to assess the amount of food produced in the County as well as consumed. It also includes survey results from over 100 farmers who were asked about the kind of resources and services that could help them scale up their production. Based on these findings and research conducted, an action plan was developed with specific goals and objectives related to: land, production and processing, and food access and consumption. One such goal is to “increase small-batch poultry, dairy and value-added meat processing.”

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Complementing the Franklin County Farm & Food System Plan was a statewide planning effort to strengthen the Commonwealth’s food system. The Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan was released by the Massachusetts Food Policy Council in December 2015, and co-authored by FRCOG staff. The Plan identifies interest by farmers to have more meat and poultry processing facilities available closer to their locations. The Plan notes, “added costs of having to take animals so far away for processing makes it harder to for farms to sell local meat at competitive prices.”47

The New Entry Sustainable Farming Project48 with the Tufts University has a Mobile Poultry Processing Unit that can be used at the farm, and has developed training materials for farmers to become licensed by the state to use this mobile processing unit.

Within the region, a new small scale poultry processing facility was approved by the Sunderland Select Board in November 2018. The operator proposes to open the facility in 2019 and anticipates to process about 200 birds per week in season. In addition, the operator intends to make it available for other farmers to use for a fee.49

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.

E. Participate in exploring the region’s ability to pursue an EDA Investing in 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.

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- **Lead and Partners:** FRCOG, PVPC, EDC, UMASS
- **Products/Outcomes:** Decision whether to pursue EDA Manufacturing Communities Partnership award.
- **Update:** The second round of the EDA’s Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP) program concluded in July 2015. FRCOG staff continue to monitor EDA initiatives to determine if other opportunities are announced. A program similar to the IMCP is the Regional Innovation Strategies (RIS) program, which has two funding opportunities. One is the i6 Challenge, which seeks to create centers for innovation and entrepreneurship that will help with proof-of-concept and commercialization programs. The other is the Seed Fund Support Program, which supports the creation of cluster-based capital programs to fund early stage ventures.

A collaboration of FCCDC, FRCOG, PVPC, VVM and others are applied to the i6 Challenge in FY2016 to support the farm and food system cluster. Unfortunately, the application was not successful. The next round for funding would be in early 2020, pending federal budget authorization.

**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 and Boston markets, 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 locally. As described by Lisa Davol of the FCCC, there is also a trend for regions to collaborate more. By identifying commonalities, they can attract visitors who might be more likely to come if there are more offerings in the broader area. By creating events and developing curated tours, such as Cider Days, is a very successful strategy in attracting visitors. As noted by the FCCC, tours that focus on food or beverages have emerged as being particularly popular.

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.

F. 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

- **Update**: Through the FRCOG Transportation Planning Program several efforts will contribute to an inventory of outdoor recreation assets. Recent studies include an inventory of public outdoor recreation access areas and a bicycle tourism plan. The FCCC, FRCOG, Hampshire County Tourism Council and other partners are developing an outdoor recreation promotional campaign for Franklin and Hampshire counties that identifies assets as well.

A particular concern for the Deerfield River rafting industry was the continued deterioration of the wood portion of the former Ramage Paper Mill in Monroe. The structure was located adjacent to the Station #5 dam on the Deerfield River and across from a primary river access point for rafters and kayakers. The Town of Monroe worked with the FRCOG, EOEEA, and TransCanada (now Great River Hydro) to secure resources to address this concern. Through the FRCOG Brownfields Program, an interior hazardous inventory was completed for the wood structure, which found contamination. Once the Town acquired the site, a FRCOG brownfields clean-up subgrant was used to remediate the wood structure. The Town also secured grant funding from EOEEA for demolition of the wood structure, and for the design and

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**Former Ramage Paper Mill’s Wood Structure Site in Monroe in 2012 and 2018**

![Image](Photo Credit: FRCOG, 2012 and 2018)
construction of a small overlook park. Clean-up and demolition was completed in August 2017. Construction of the Monroe Bridge Overlook park and retaining wall to secure Depot Street was completed in January 2019.

ii. **Assess the feasibility of developing 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
- **Update**: The Town of Orange has proposed several projects that enhance residents and visitors enjoyment of the outdoors. The Town has the Orange Riverfront Park in the center of the Downtown that can serve as a focal point for current and future outdoor recreation efforts. The Park has a canoe/kayak boat launch park and a boathouse that is rented to vendors renting canoes and kayaks. The Park serves as a river access point for the Millers Falls Blue Trail that connects to Downtown Athol. The Millers River Watershed Council describes a blue trail as “a dedicated stretch of river that enjoys special clean water safeguards and is a destination for fishing, boating, and other recreation.”

Both Towns have used MassDevelopment’s Commonwealth Places program to create outdoor recreation assets in their communities. This program uses the Patronicity platform for project proponents to launch a crowd-funding campaign that, if successful in meeting their goal, is matched with MassDevelopment grant funds. In 2017, the Town of Orange constructed a pocket park on East Main Street after the campaign raised $9,773 from 55 sponsors and leveraged the MassDevelopment matching. Also in 2017, this program was used to fund an accessible floating dock in the Millers River at the Alan E. Rich Environmental Park. In 2018, this program was used by the Millers River Environmental Center in Athol to fund accessibility improvements.

G. 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

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50 Millers River Watershed Council website, [https://millerswatershed.org/blue-trails/](https://millerswatershed.org/blue-trails/)
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
- **Update:** The Amtrak Vermonter passenger rail service became operational on December 29, 2014. According to statistics from the National Association of Railroad Passengers, there were 5,315 riders embarking and disembarking at the Greenfield station in its first full year in 2015. By 2018, ridership at the Greenfield station increased by 22% to 6,467. The top travel pair (i.e. trip between two locations) for Greenfield station riders was New York, NY.

The FRCOG Transportation Planning Program studied the use of the passenger rail service for tourism and developed recommendations to promote the Vermonter service to bring visitors to Franklin County in 2017. The study noted that the top three destinations on the Vermonter route for passengers leaving New York City were not other urban metropolitan areas, but communities known as tourist destinations and/or college areas in Massachusetts and Vermont. The study examined examples of successful programs that encourage tourists to travel by rail to rural destinations or leveraged partnerships to connect and cross-promote opportunities. The examples serve as inspiration for exploring options to promote Greenfield and other nearby Vermonter stations. The study’s recommendations identified ways to improve existing promotional efforts and to foster new opportunities.

As described in Strategy 4.D.i., a pilot project to expand passenger rail service connecting Springfield to Greenfield, Holyoke and Northampton will launch in late summer 2019. For the service to be sustained after the pilot project period, there needs to be a substantive increase in ridership from the current level. A stakeholder group has formed that includes FRCOG, PVPC, FCCC, and other chambers of commerce as well as a rail advocate group and Mayoral office representatives from the new station communities. This group is coordinating activities to promote the new service and monitor its success.

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Creative Economy
The region’s natural beauty 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. Revenues earned through these goods and services 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.

H. 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
- **Update**: Coordinated by the FACP and with support from PVCEN, Creative Economy Summit 5 was held in June 2015 at Greenfield Community College. The one-day summit included a keynote presentation by the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Digital Games Institute and offered panel sessions on the topics of visibility, talent, business development, and space.

FACP suspended a regular schedule of Art Buzz events, and instead periodically co-hosted Plug Into The Creative Valley events. Coordinated by the PVCEN, Plug Into held networking events monthly throughout the Pioneer Valley region from 2014 to 2016. The FACP hosted events in Greenfield included a talks by a local television producer and arts columnist on how creative businesses can best pitch their projects for being covered in the media in September 2015; and a networking event in Shelburne Falls in September 2016.

While not formally hosting Plug Into events, PVCEN and local creative economy advocates continue to support events and initiatives that foster this important cluster. For example, FCCC has been a leader in encouraging artists and arts groups to participate in a festival called ArtWeek, presented by the Highland
Street Foundation and produced by the Boch Center.\footnote{52}{ArtWeek website, \url{https://www.artweekma.org/about/}} ArtWeek encourages creative experiences in communities across the Commonwealth. The FCCC hosted the statewide kick-off for 2018 ArtWeek in Greenfield and in 2019 is collaborating with groups to promote a series of events as part of ArtWeek.

I. Complete a \textbf{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.

- \textit{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.
- \textit{Lead and Partners}: GSFABA, FACP, PVCEN, local arts organizations and businesses
- \textit{Products/Outcomes}: Completion of Creative Economy survey responses for West County
- \textit{Update}: In 2017, the GSFABA created a new non-profit subsidiary called West County Arts & Culture (WCAC). The purpose of forming this entity was “to promote the many vibrant arts and culture initiatives in our region that are a vital part of our economy and quality of life.”\footnote{53}{Greater Shelburne Falls Area Business Association, February 2017 Business Bulletin, \url{www.gsfaba.org}} The WCAC took over management of HATCH, which stands for Hilltown Arts: Thriving Community Happenings. Through HATCH, participating artists get help developing and funding community project ideas. As of 2017, ten projects were supported over two rounds of HATCH. Funding for HATCH came in part from a Massachusetts Cultural Council grant to GSFABA.

J. Support the \textbf{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).

- \textit{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.
- \textit{Lead and Partners}: FRCOG, FACP, Arts organizations, Venue owners
- \textit{Products/Outcomes}: Completion of study
- \textit{Update}: The FRCOG completed an inventory of performance venues in the county and adjacent areas. The inventory identified auditoriums and performance
venues in Franklin County, and included information about the venue and if they are readily accessible to performing artists who are not associated with the facility owner. Many of the venues are associated with public or private schools, which may limit their accessibility by outside performers.

In recent years, new venues have been developed or expanded their availability, and additional venues are proposed. The historic Whately Town Hall has been renovated as a community and performance space. The building was retrofitted to accommodate the Historical Society and community meeting space, as well as have a theater space in the upstairs auditorium that can seat about 200.

The Shea Theater in Turners Falls has undertaken a series of facility improvements, from signage and seating to a new sound system. A capital campaign is seeking to fund additional improvements to allow for larger productions.

The Hawks and Reed Performing Arts Center (formerly the Arts Block) in Downtown Greenfield has developed three performance spaces. The top floor is used by the Silverthorne Theater Company for performances. The main floor and lower level are used for concerts.

New performance space is proposed for the former First National Bank Building in Downtown Greenfield. The building is vacant and in need of redevelopment. One reuse proposed is to redevelopment the building as a performance venue.

First National Bank Building in Downtown Greenfield.

Photo Credit: FRCOG
Chapter 6: 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. 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, will be documented in each CEDS Annual Report, in the most appropriate year the project or initiative was launched. The next table, Table 12, includes projects and initiatives for the 2018-2019 CEDS Program year.

**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 each CEDS Annual Report in the year the project or initiative was completed. Table 12 includes the number of jobs created and retained for 2018-2019 CEDS Program year projects and initiatives and related efforts.
**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 each CEDS Annual Report. The following table includes the number and types of investments undertaken for 2018-2019 CEDS Program year projects and initiatives and related efforts.

**Table 12: CEDS Program Year Measurements #1-3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Jobs*</th>
<th>Project Type</th>
<th>Investment Estimate (Public or Private source)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FCCDC Lending Program’s 7 Business Loans Issued</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Business Development</td>
<td>$1,122,676 (private)** $111,713 (public)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Greenfield’s Olive Street Parking Garage</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Facility Construction</td>
<td>$10,000,000 (public)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Monroe’s Overlook Park and Depot Street Retaining Wall</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Facility Construction</td>
<td>$925,000 (public)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA Economic Development Incentive Program for Businesses in the Greater Franklin County Economic Target Area Businesses</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Business Development</td>
<td>$7,380,000 (private)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wireless Broadband and Cable Broadband Network Expansion***</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Facility Construction</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* Includes both new jobs created and jobs retained. It also includes jobs associated with the redevelopment or construction phase of a project.

** Includes private investment by borrowers and loan amounts from the PV Grows Investment Fund, which was capitalized with funds from private foundations and individuals.

***Public funds were invested by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) and the MA Executive Office of Economic Development and Housing through the MBI Flexible Grant Program and the MBI Broadband Extension Program. In 2019, $2.3 million was awarded to WiValley-MA to construct a wireless broadband network for four towns, of which two are in Franklin County. A $4 million award to Comcast funded cable television broadband extensions by September 2018 to nine towns, of which five are in Franklin County. The specific amount of jobs and investment in Franklin County is not available (N/A).
Measurement #4 – Changes in Economic Environment in the Region

Changes in the general economic environment in CEDS Region will be documented in each CEDS 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 13: Select Economic Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>CEDS Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018 Size of Labor Force (based on where people live)</td>
<td>41,365 (↑ 3.7%)</td>
<td>67,889 (↑ 3.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 Number of Total Private Sector Employed* (based on where the job is located)</td>
<td>20,265 (↑ 0.8%)</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 Average Earnings Per Job (based on where the job is located)</td>
<td>$44,635 (↑ 2.4%)</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Massachusetts Labor and Workforce Development, Labor Market Information, 2019; U.S. Department of Commerce, County Business Patterns, 2016; Commerce Department, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2019
*Data source only includes private-sector establishments with five or more employees, and as a result does not include government or self-employed workers.

Key: The following symbols indicate the direction of change from the previous year’s statistics with the percent change.

↑ = Increase from previous year
↓ = Decrease from previous year
⇔ = No change from previous year
Appendix A – CEDS Committee & EDD Governing Board Membership

CEDS Committee membership consists of appointments from each member municipality and appointments from regional entities. Not all seats on the Committee are filled. All meetings are held in the first floor meeting room of the John W. Olver Transit Center at 12 Olive Street, Greenfield, MA. Meeting agendas are posted on the FRCOG website calendar. At their June 12, 2019 meeting, the CEDS Committee voted unanimously to approve the 2019 CEDS Annual Report.

Table 14: CEDS Committee Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appointing Authority</th>
<th>Committee Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town of Bernardston</td>
<td>Stanley Garland</td>
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<td>Town of Buckland</td>
<td>Michael McCusker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town of Charlemont</td>
<td>Vaughn Tower</td>
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<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 Erving</td>
<td>Bryan Smith</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town of Greenfield</td>
<td>MJ Adams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town of Heath</td>
<td>Art Schwenger</td>
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<td>Town of Leverett</td>
<td>Heather Hutchinson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town of Montague</td>
<td>Walter Ramsey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town of Orange</td>
<td>Gabriele Voelker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town of Wendell</td>
<td>Nan Riebschlaeger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town of Whately</td>
<td>Jonathan Edwards</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRCOG Executive Committee</td>
<td>Mayor Bill Martin; Alternate: Linda Dunlavy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jim Basford</td>
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<td>Martha Field</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin Regional Planning Board</td>
<td>Tom Hutcheson</td>
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<td>Jeanie Schermesser</td>
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<td>Andrea Donlon</td>
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<td>Franklin County Community Development Corporation</td>
<td>Gary Dillensneider</td>
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<td>John Waite</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin County Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Diana Szynal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Shelburne Falls Area Business Association</td>
<td>John Baldwin / Kara Cavanaugh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin-Hampshire Regional Employment Board</td>
<td>Patricia Crosby</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin County Housing &amp; Redevelopment Authority</td>
<td>Glen Ohlund</td>
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</table>

The composition and terms of CEDS Committee membership was amended at the December 6, 2018 CEDS Committee meeting. The purpose of the amendment was to better focus the Committee on the development and implementation of the next five-year CEDS Plan. The amendment removed Amherst, Athol and Phillipston from the
required representation as these municipalities are not members of the FRCOG organization and are members of other regional planning agency and EDD Economic Development District organizations. The number of seats were reduced from 50 to 19, and retained broad representation. The composition seeks representatives from specific geographic areas as well as important regional partners. An enhanced member recruitment process was developed to better engage the public as well as implementation partners. The amendment also aligned the membership term to correspond with the five-year CEDS Plan development cycle. Solicitation for new members began in spring 2019, so that the CEDS Committee membership would be in place for the start of the 2019-2020 CEDS Program year.

The membership of the Economic Development District (EDD) Governing Board transitioned in 2018-2019. Membership went from being a subgroup of the CEDS Committee to being the governing authority of the District Organization, the FRCOG Executive Committee. The membership of the FRCOG Executive Committee includes two regionally elected members, an appointment from the FRPB, and two members of the Council. As described in the Charter adopted by all member municipalities, the 29-member Council provides oversight of the FRCOG organization. The Executive Committee of the FRCOG Council meets monthly and provides direct oversight of the Executive Director, staff and programs.

The membership of the EDD Governing Board is appointed by the FRCOG Executive Committee. The EDD Governing Board’s procedural rules allow for the FRCOG Executive Committee to expand the EDD Governing Board, as needed, to ensure a broad representation of economic interests. The current EDD Governing Board members have experience and expertise in: government, small business, finance, and manufacturing. The EDD Governing Board voted to adopt the 2019 CEDS Annual Report at their meeting on June 13, 2019.

### Table 15: EDD Governing Board Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governing Board Membership</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bill Perlman</td>
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<td>Jay DiPucchio</td>
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<td>Jim Basford</td>
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<td>Mayor William Martin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin Fox</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B – Economic Development Project Survey Responses

As part of creating the 2015 CEDS Plan, 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. An online survey form to collect project information 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 CEDS Plan is updated, municipalities and regional organizations to may submit new and/or remove existing projects on 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>
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<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 Avenue</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 Street</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 Road</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>
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<tr>
<td>Project Title</td>
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<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redevelopment of IP Millers Falls Papermill site</td>
<td>Erving – 8 Papermill Road</td>
<td>The redevelopment of a former papermill site for commercial, light industrial or mixed use. The site is owned by the Town of Erving, which is seeking to remediate hazardous materials, selectively demolish structures, and prepare the site for development (i.e. install infrastructure, subdivide) for future economic use by the private sector.</td>
<td>Town of Erving</td>
<td>To be confirmed.</td>
</tr>
<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 Chambers of Commerce 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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Title</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>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 &quot;Foundational Manufacturing&quot; 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>
</tr>
<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>
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<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Besley-Bendix Property Eco-Industrial Park</td>
<td>Greenfield - 180 Laurel Street Extension</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 Street</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 Street</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>I-91 Industrial Park Expansion</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>Substantial site preparation work for new lots in the Industrial Park</td>
<td>City of Greenfield</td>
<td>FRCOG, Commonwealth of Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First National Bank</td>
<td>Greenfield - 9 Bank Row</td>
<td>Renovation of abandoned building for downtown cultural center</td>
<td>City of Greenfield</td>
<td>Greenfield Redevelopment Authority, Commonwealth of Massachusetts</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Downtown Infrastructure</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>Upgrades to water and sewer infrastructure in the downtown area</td>
<td>City of Greenfield</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Massachusetts, FRCOG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abercrombie Building</td>
<td>Greenfield - 56 Bank Row</td>
<td>Renovation of empty building for new office space</td>
<td>City of Greenfield</td>
<td>Studio Junction LLC, 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 230,000 square feet Strathmore Mill complex to qualified developers. Funding needed to repair pedestrian bridges, and to remediate and demolish section of former Strathmore Mill and Railroad Salvage Building.</td>
<td>Montague Planning and Conservation Department</td>
<td>Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Turners Falls Paper Company, private developers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnpike Road Industrial Park</td>
<td>Montague - Off Sandy Lane</td>
<td>45 acre planned light-industrial park on municipal land with planned 6 MW solar facility. Schematic design complete. Funding needed to extend infrastructure on Sandy Lane.</td>
<td>Montague Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>FRCOG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American Cultural Heritage Center</td>
<td>Montague - Turners Falls</td>
<td>The Center would include interpretive history of Native American life in the Pioneer Valley, and host artifacts and provide a place to advance research on the rich pre-colonial history of the area. Seeking a planning and feasibility grant to determine suitable location, funding needs and pre-development.</td>
<td>Montague Board of Selectmen, local Tribal Historic Preservation Offices</td>
<td>National Park Service Battlefield Protection Program, local historical commissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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>Project Title</td>
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<td>West River Business Incubator Development</td>
<td>Orange - 100-140 West Main Street</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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LaunchSpace, Inc.</td>
<td>Orange – 131 West Main Street</td>
<td>LaunchSpace, Inc. will serve as a catalyst for new business development and as a center for workforce training. LaunchSpace will establish a makerspace with studios/shops for multiple disciplines, classroom space, communal areas, and office space for LaunchSpace, Inc. non-profit organization.</td>
<td>LaunchSpace, Inc.</td>
<td>MassDevelopment, Orange Innovation Center, and additional partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Arts Center Development</td>
<td>Orange - 6 Prospect Street</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 Boyd (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>
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<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>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C – Legal Advertisement Announcing Public Comment Period

Copy of the legal advertisement published on May 10, 2019 in The Greenfield Recorder.