2020-2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Five-Year Plan for Franklin County, MA

Prepared by: Franklin Regional Council of Governments


Funding provided by the U.S. Economic Development Administration’s Partnership Planning Program with support from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments.
This document was prepared by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) using Federal funds under award #ED19PHI3020059 from the Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Economic Development Administration or the U.S. Department of Commerce.

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# 2020 CEDS Plan for Franklin County, MA

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The 2020 Franklin County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Plan serves as a roadmap for strategic partners to advance policies, programs, and projects that support economic opportunity for all and contribute to the well being of Franklin County communities.

The 2020 CEDS Plan includes a summary of current demographic and economic conditions; an analysis of economic and community development strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; and strategies to implement that build upon the region’s unique advantages. In addition, the Plan includes a chapter on strategies to build economic resiliency that will allow the region to respond, recover and maintain long-term strength. The final chapter is a dashboard of metrics to evaluate the advancement of strategic goals and overall economic conditions. This dashboard will be updated in subsequent Annual Reports.

The CEDS Plan was created by FRCOG staff under the guidance of the CEDS Committee and Economic Development District (EDD) Governing Board with input provided by member municipalities, partnering organizations and the public. The Plan was developed in accordance with U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) regulations 13 C.F.R. § 303.7 and under guidance issued on January 21, 2015. The 2020 CEDS Plan, and subsequent annual reports, will be posted on the FRCOG.org website so as to be available to the public and regional stakeholders through its five-year implementation term.

Economic Development Planning During COVID-19 Pandemic

The development of the 2020 CEDS Plan was launched in 2019. By March 2020, the societal and economic impacts of the 2019 novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) were present in Franklin County. The impacts of this crisis on individuals, communities, the workforce, businesses and overall economy are significant, and will be felt for some time. The best methods for how local businesses, organizations and communities can mitigate and recover will continue to emerge and evolve.

This Plan reflects the best information and strategies available at the time of its creation. The demographic and economic information in Chapter 2 is primarily annual data that was available in early 2020. Datasets are often released with a one to two year lag time. As a result, they do not reflect the

economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis. As available, monthly or quarterly data is included to present the most current information available. In addition, findings from a survey of businesses and organizations conducted in late March 2020 is included to provide an understanding of the economic impacts.

**Timeline of State and Federal Government Actions due to COVID-19:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 11, 2020</td>
<td>World Health Organization characterized the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 24, 2020</td>
<td>Baker-Polito Administration stay at home advisory and an emergency order to temporarily close non-essential businesses through April 7 went into effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 25, 2020</td>
<td>Baker-Polito Administration suspended educational operations at schools and non-emergency child care programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 27, 2020</td>
<td>U.S. President issued major disaster declaration for state due to the pandemic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 31, 2020</td>
<td>Baker-Polito Administration emergency order extended to May 4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 21, 2020</td>
<td>Baker-Polito Administration closed all schools through the end of the school year and extended closure of all non-emergency child care through June 29.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 28, 2020</td>
<td>Baker-Polito Administration emergency order extended to May 18.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 18, 2020</td>
<td>Baker-Polito Administration released <em>Reopening Massachusetts</em>, “a four-phased strategy to responsiby reopen businesses and activities while continuing to fight COVID-19.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 18-25, 2020</td>
<td>Phase I of <em>Reopening Massachusetts</em> began, including manufacturing, construction, offices, retail, and limited personal services, within guidelines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 21, 2020</td>
<td>Baker-Polito Administration announced that residents, whose regular unemployment compensation was exhausted, could receive Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation, as funded through the CARES Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 6, 2020</td>
<td>Phase II of <em>Reopening Massachusetts</em> began retail, restaurants, lodging, and additional personal services, within guidelines.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1: Reopening Massachusetts 4-Phase Strategy**

Chapter 2: Summary Background

This chapter provides a summary of economic development conditions for Franklin County, MA. In the appendix is a breakdown of data for the twenty-six municipalities of Franklin County. Located in north-western Massachusetts, Franklin County is at the center of New England and not far from major urban markets. The counties within a 50-mile radius have a population of over 1.8 million people and has seen a 2.4% growth rate in the past ten years.

Map 1: Franklin County, MA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approximate Travel Time to/from Greenfield, MA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45 Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Geography

Franklin County is the most rural area of the commonwealth and is known for its scenic rivers and hills, superior agricultural soils, and picturesque villages and historic mill towns. The Deerfield River watershed to the west and the Millers River watershed to the east, both feed into the Connecticut River, which flows through the center of the region. Over 78% of the county’s acreage is covered in forest with 9% in cropland, pasture or cultivated land, 3% water, and 2% impervious land cover (i.e. buildings, pavement, etc.).

Map 2: Franklin County Land Cover, 2016.

Figure 2: Franklin County Land Cover

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Cover (2016)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forest (Deciduous, Evergreen)</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hay/Pasture, Cultivated, Grassland</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivated, Hay, Grassland, Pasture,</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impervious</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 MassGIS, 2016 Land Cover Data Set
**Population, Age and Race**

The U.S. Census Bureau estimated that Franklin County had a population of 70,963 in 2018, which was 0.6% decrease since 2010\(^2\). The population density of Franklin County was approximately 98 people per square mile of land area, compared to 880 people per square mile for the state. 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.

Over time, the total population for Franklin County has been relatively stagnant or in decline over the last twenty years. This same pattern is experienced in surrounding rural counties including Berkshire, Windham and Cheshire as well. Recent projections indicate that the total population of Franklin County will continue to be relatively stagnant and then decline.

**Figure 3: Franklin County Population and Population Projections**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census and Estimates Programs; MassDOT and UMass Donahue Institute, Population Projections, 2018.

Map 3 depicts population change at the county-level since 2010 for the counties across the Commonwealth and in nearby New Hampshire and Vermont counties. As the map indicates, high population growth is being experienced in the metropolitan Boston area. Areas not experiencing population growth are rural counties, like Berkshire and Franklin Counties. It has been reported that a major contributor to population growth in Massachusetts is international migration. According to 2018 ACS Five-Year Estimates, the percent of the population foreign-born was 5% in Franklin County, compared to 17% and 13% for the state and nation.

\(^2\) Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 Population Estimates, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)
A review of how the population is distributed among age groups demonstrates that Franklin County’s population skews older than the state and nation. 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.

**Impact of COVID-19: Potential Population Shifts**

Recent and projected population trends indicate Franklin County will have stagnant growth to population decline. New York City, Boston and other major metropolitan areas have been struck hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to this experience, there may be greater interest by residents of urban areas to move to more rural communities located within a reasonable distance to these metropolitan areas. As a result, Franklin County may experience some level of this population shift, which can impact the real estate market, land use, and business development.

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51% of Franklin County’s population is 45 years or older, compared to 43% for the state and 41% for the nation.
Franklin County is significantly less racially and ethnically diverse than the state or nation. According to the ACS 2014-2018 Five-Year Estimates, over 90% of Franklin County’s population is white and not of Hispanic or Latino origin. From this same data set, 6,520 people or 9.2% of the Franklin County population was a person of color (i.e. a person of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity or a person of a race or two or more races, other than white alone), compared to 28% for the state and 39% for the nation. Over time, the population of color in Franklin County has steadily increased in the past decade. These increases are happening while the change in total population has remained stagnant. For example, from the 2012 to 2018 ACS Five-Year Estimates, the total population declined by -554 people (or -1%); however, the population of color grew by 1,062 (or 19%). The following figure depicts the population of color in Franklin County by race or Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.

Figure 5: Franklin County Population of Color by Race or Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 ACS Five-Year Estimates
In terms of educational attainment for the population 25 years of age and older, only 7% of Franklin County residents do not have a high school or equivalent diploma, compared to 10% for the state and 12% for the nation. Franklin County has a higher percentage of the population with at least a Bachelor’s or Graduate or professional degree (37%), compared to the nation (31%) and less than the state (43%). Franklin County also has a higher population with some college or an Associate’s Degree (28%) than the state (23%) and similar to the nation (29%).

**Figure 6: Franklin County Highest Educational Level for Population 25 years and over**
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 ACS Five-Year Estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Massachusetts</th>
<th>United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than High School Graduate</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School graduate</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College or Associate’s degree</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate or Professional Degree</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Housing**

According to 2018 ACS Five-Year Estimates, 72% of the Franklin County housing stock was built before 1980, which was the percentage as the state. Of occupied housing units in the county, 69% were owner-occupied and 31% renter-occupied, which indicates a higher home-ownership rate than the state and nation. The fuel used to heat homes in Franklin County was mostly fuel oil, kerosene or similar products (46% of all occupied housing units), followed by utility gas (17%), wood (14%) and electricity (12%). The percentage of homes using fuel oil and wood as a heat source was much higher in Franklin County than compared to the state (27% fuel oil and 1% wood) and the nation (5% fuel oil and 1% wood).

**Franklin County Housing**
- 34,071 Housing Units
- 69% owner-occupied
- 31% renter-occupied
- 72% of housing stock built before 1980
- 69% of housing is in single-family buildings
- 28% in multi-family buildings
- 3% in mobile homes or other structures
Recent trends in single-family home sales show that the volume of sales and median sale prices surpassed pre-recession levels. According to the Realtor Association of Pioneer Valley, the median single-family sale price for Franklin County homes increased 22% in the last five years to $226,250 in 2019. The statewide median single-family sales price was $413,254 in 2019. Moving forward, residential real estate trends may be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as causing an economic downturn that will increase the number of foreclosures.

**Figure 7: Franklin County Median Sale Price and Number of Closed Sales for Single Family Homes, 2015-2019**


For a home to be considered affordable, a household should not spend more than 30% of its gross monthly income on housing costs. A recent rental housing market analysis conducted for Franklin County and Athol examined the supply and demand of such affordable housing for different income levels. A key study finding was that affordability or the cost burden for housing is an issue for rental households. According to the study, approximately 20% of these rental households are spending more than 30% of their household income on housing, with an additional 23% spending greater than 50% of their household income. Other findings noted were: the increase in one-person households and the lower rate of development for new rental housing compared to the state.

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3 RKG Associates, Affordable Rental Housing Study – Franklin County and Town of Athol. 2019.
Transportation

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

Franklin County has the advantage of having two of the state’s primary transportation routes, Interstate-91 and Route 2, and has access to the Mass Turnpike/Interstate-90 only 30 miles away. The county also has two general aviation airports in Turners Falls and Orange that can accommodate small jets and recreational air services.

In addition, there is an extensive freight rail network in the county, accessed at the East Deerfield Railyard. Scheduled passenger rail service returned to Greenfield in 2015, after over twenty years without any platform in Franklin County. The Amtrak Vermonter provides daily service from northern Vermont to New York City and Washington DC. The Valley Flyer is a pilot train service launched in 2019 to expand passenger service connections between Greenfield to Springfield. There is strong interest in establishing this north-south passenger rail service permanently, after the pilot period.

In terms of east-west passenger rail, there is only one daily train that passes through western Massachusetts, Amtrak’s Lake Shore Limited connects Chicago to Boston. The schedule and frequency of this service does not provide convenient rail service from this region to Boston. There is great interest in extending the existing rail service that connects Boston to Worcester, to connect to Springfield and Pittsfield. There also continues to be interest in extending east-west rail in the northern corridor from Boston to Greenfield and North Adams.

Because of the region’s transportation assets, major urban markets (including the Boston metropolitan area and New York City) and international airports (such as Bradly Airport near Hartford) can be reached relatively easily. For transportation within the county, residents and workers predominantly rely on personal vehicle use for travel.

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4 FRCOG Transportation Planning Program, [www.frcog.org/program-services/transportation-planning/](http://www.frcog.org/program-services/transportation-planning/)
Employed residents of Franklin County predominantly travel to work by driving alone (77%), followed by carpooling (9%) and walking (4%). Less than 2% of workers travel by public transportation. Seven percent (7%) worked at home, compared to 5% for the state and nation.

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau provides a look at commuting patterns for both where Franklin County residents work and where workers with jobs in Franklin County live. In 2017, there were 37,021 residents of Franklin County employed. For those who lived in Franklin County, 41% were employed in jobs located in the county, with 16% employed in Hampshire County, 10% in Hampden County, 10% in Worcester County, and 5% in Middlesex County. The remaining 16% of residents worked in other locations, including the Berkshires, Boston and Hartford.

From this same dataset, there were 26,046 filled jobs located in Franklin County. As a result, there was a net outflow of over 10,000 jobs (i.e. more people worked outside Franklin County than came to Franklin County to work). For the workers employed in jobs in Franklin County but were not residents, 11% lived in Hampshire County, 9% in Hampden County, and 7% in Worcester County. The remaining 15% of workers lived in the Berkshires; Windham County, VT; Cheshire County, NH and counties in the eastern part of the state.

About 10% of workers statewide commuted by public transit. For Franklin County and surrounding counties, the percentage was 3% or less.

By February/March 2020, the global health and economic crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic began to directly impact Massachusetts. To better understand the impact of this crisis on businesses and organizations located in Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden Counties, a survey was issued by a group of regional partners. The survey was released on March 24, 2020 on the online Survey Monkey platform, with responses due by March 31, 2020. The survey was released on the same day an order by Governor Charlie Baker went into effect for all non-essential businesses to cease in-person operations until April 7, 2020, and a stay at home advisory was issued by the MA Department of Public Health. Since that announcement, the order and advisory has been extended. Also after the release of the survey, the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was enacted on April 2, 2020. The CARES Act allocates $2.2 trillion in support to individuals and businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and economic downturn.

There were 284 responses to the survey, of which 40% (or 139) were from Franklin County – based businesses and organizations. The following data is for only the Franklin County based respondents. The report for all survey findings may be downloaded from the FRCOG.org website.

The 139 Franklin County –based respondents were from across industries, including arts, recreation, manufacturing, retail, construction, professional services, restaurants, and agriculture. Eight-six percent (86%) of respondents were private for-profit sector businesses. Over half had less than 10 employees, 27% had 10-24 employees and 12% had more than 25 employees before the state of emergency.

**Question:** What financial impact do you anticipate the COVID-19 state of emergency is having on your business/organization? (select one)

- Positive impact, 6%
- No or mild negative impact, 7%
- Somewhat negative, 19%
- Significantly negative, 39%
- Severly negative, 29%
**Question:** At this rate, how long do you estimate your business/organization can operate with your current cash flow and/or reserves? (select one)

**Question:** If your business/organization is being impacted, in what ways? (select all that apply)
**Question:** What resources or assistance, if any, will you use to manage impacts from COVID-19? (select all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource/Assistance</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant funding, if available</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment insurance</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delay payment to supplier/vendor</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New business loan or refinance an existing loan</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business insurance</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business counseling/technical assistance</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following Continuity of Operation Plan (COOP)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from industry networks/peer businesses</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in a program to mitigate layoffs</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private investor contribution or crowd-funding</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support, such as for payroll, invest in equipment or safety protocols</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanded unemployment benefits/support for laid off workers</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferral or relief mortgage or rent payment</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business technical assistance/support/guidance</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional staff or volunteers</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT and broadband support, such as internet access at home</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defer tax payment or reduce tax burden</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry-specific comments</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question:** What other areas of support do you anticipate needing in the short-term? (open-end response) [In order of most to least frequent responses]
- Financial support, such as for payroll, invest in equipment or safety protocols
- Expanded unemployment benefits/support for laid off workers
- Deferral or relief mortgage or rent payment
- Business technical assistance/support/guidance
- Additional staff or volunteers
- IT and broadband support, such as internet access at home
- Defer tax payment or reduce tax burden
- Industry-specific comments

**Question:** What other areas of support do you anticipate needing in the long-term? (open-end response) [In order of most to least frequent responses]
- Financial support, such as loans and debt management
- Business technical assistance – business model transition, marketing
- Scaling up operations/managing work load/additional workers, once crisis ends
- Restoring community confidence
- Deferral or relief mortgage or rent payment
- IT and broadband support, such as better internet access
- Return of advertisers
- Accessing alternate suppliers
**Labor Force and 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 recent years, Franklin County’s total labor force (including employed and unemployed people) surpassed pre-recession levels.

**Figure 10: Franklin County Employed and Unemployed, 2005-2019**

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; MA Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

The economic recession experienced from December 2007 through June 2009 resulted in a decline in labor force participation and the number of employed. As the county and the nation recovered in subsequent years, people increasingly re-entered the work force and employers began to hire more people. For Franklin County people entering or re-entering the workforce resulted in increases to the labor force, despite stagnant overall population trends.

The unemployment rate for Franklin County was 2.7% in 2019, which was lower than both the state (2.9%) and nation (3.7%). Franklin County’s unemployment rate is consistently lower than state and national figures. Within the county, the communities with unemployment rates higher than the state and nation in 2019 was Rowe (4.0%) and Charlemont (3.8%). The 2019...
rates for the larger population centers were 2.7% for Greenfield, 3.1% for Montague, and 3.5% for Orange.

**Figure 11: Unemployment Rates, 2005-2019**

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; MA Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

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**Impact of COVID-19: Unemployment and UI Claims**

As monthly employment and unemployment insurance (UI) claimant data for spring 2020 is released, it will depict the extreme change happening in the labor market due to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The following charts provide monthly data for workers in the labor force who are employed and unemployed, and for workers who have filed UI claims from January through April 2020. When viewing this data there are two important considerations.

The first consideration is that the CARES Act, enacted in late March 2020, included a provision to allow some self-employed workers and independent contractors to be eligible to apply for unemployment compensation. Self-employed workers and independent contractors are included when monthly labor force and unemployment are calculated. However, as they were not previously eligible, they would not have been included UI claimant data prior to the CARES Act.

The second consideration is that the UI claimant data for April 2020 may include fraudulent claims. In late May 2020, the MA Department of Unemployment Assistance announced that personal information, stolen from a prior national data breach, was being used by criminals to file fraudulent unemployment claims. The number of fraudulent claims successfully filed is not known at this time.
Figure 12: Franklin County Employed and Unemployed, January-April 2020
Source: MA Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

March to April 2020
-11% decline in size of labor force
330% increase in number of unemployed workers

Figure 13: Monthly Unemployment Rates, January-April 2020
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; MA Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

March to April 2020
Franklin County: 2.9% and 14.0%
Massachusetts: 3.0% and 15.9%
United States: 4.5% and 14.4%

The unemployment rate reflects the number of people collecting unemployment benefits under state or federal government programs. Unemployment insurance (UI) claimant data depicts the number of people who have applied for these benefits. Both data sets do not completely reflect all people who are unemployed and could work, such as potential workers who are not actively looking for work. In the past, this also included workers typically not eligible for UI benefits, like self-employed or independent contract workers. However, starting in April 2020, some independent contractors and self-employed workers were eligible to apply for unemployment compensation due to the CARES Act.

The following figure depicts data for UI claimants in the Franklin-Hampshire Workforce Development Area (WDA), which includes the cities and towns of Franklin County, Hampshire County and the North Quabbin region. As seen in this figure, UI claims are typically cyclical with increases in claim occurring in January and February, and decreases in claims beginning in March through May. Data for 2020 shows a change to this cycle with a sharp rise in claims starting in March 2020 and growing significantly by April 2020 (nearly 360%).
From April 2019 to April 2020, the total number of UI claims in the Franklin-Hampshire WDA increased from 1,841 to 14,804. This dataset provides information about the industries, occupations, and previous average weekly wages of workers who filed for unemployment compensation. Again, it should be noted that starting in April 2020, independent contractors and self-employed workers were eligible to apply due to the CARES Act.

The workers most impacted in April 2020 were those earning lower wages. For example, in April 2020, 32% of UI claimants (or 4,739 unemployed workers) had an average weekly wage prior to unemployment of less than $400. The previous year, the percent of UI claimants who had made this wage was 22% (or 407 unemployed workers).

### Industries with the greatest increase in UI claimants from April 2019 to April 2020.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry in Franklin-Hampshire WDA</th>
<th>April 2019</th>
<th>April 2020</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and Food Services</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>2,435</td>
<td>↑ 2,364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>2,040</td>
<td>↑ 1,901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>1,837</td>
<td>↑ 1,631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>1,453</td>
<td>↑ 1,258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>1,534</td>
<td>↑ 1,047</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Occupations with the greatest increase in UI claimants from April 2019 to April 2020.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation in Franklin-Hampshire WDA</th>
<th>April 2019</th>
<th>April 2020</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Preparation and Serving</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>2,595</td>
<td>↑ 2,519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office and Administrative Support</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>1,463</td>
<td>↑ 1,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and Related</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>1,270</td>
<td>↑ 1,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>1,334</td>
<td>↑ 1,155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Occupations</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>1,1149</td>
<td>↑ 1,004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The “class of worker” describes the sector a resident is employed in, such as a private for-profit or non-profit. Data about unpaid family workers was less than 1% and is not included in the chart. 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 in Franklin County.

Figure 15: Franklin County Class of Worker
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 ACS Five-Year Estimates.

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). Two of the industries with the greatest number of employees are Health Care and Social Assistance Services and Education Services, which frequently are also private non-profit organizations, such as hospitals, social service agencies, and independent schools.

The self-employed class includes workers who are employed by a private company as an independent contractor or in their own not incorporated business. In Franklin County 12% of workers are self-employed, compared to 9% for the state and 10% for the nation. Rural areas in general have a higher percentage of self-employed workers either out of necessity (due to not finding employment) or out of opportunity⁵.

⁵ The Determinants of Rural Self-Employment: Insights from County-Level Data. Goetz and Rupasingha NERCRD/Penn State and Atlanta Fed, October 2011.
Income and Wages

The income of Franklin County residents is generally close to income estimates for the nation. However, incomes in Franklin County and surrounding 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.

Figure 16: Median and Per Capita Income Levels
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates

Within Franklin County, almost half of the municipalities have per capita incomes lower than the nation. The Town of Monroe has a per capita income that is 80% below the national figure. Census Tract 414, which is located south of Downtown Greenfield, also has a per capita income 80% below the national figure. As the statewide per capita income is high, 21 out of 26 Franklin County municipalities have lower income rates.

The federal government sets income thresholds by size family to determine poverty. The percent of families and individuals who live below these incomes

Measuring Economic Distress: Per Capita Income
A criteria used by the U.S. EDA to measure economic distress is if an area’s per capita income is 80% or below the national figure.

According to the latest ACS data, 80% of the national per capita income is $26,097. In Franklin County, the Town of Monroe and Census Tract 414 in Downtown Greenfield meet this criteria.

The economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the per capita income statistic will not be reflected in the U.S. Census Bureau’s ACS Five-year Estimates until 2016-2020 data is released in 2022.
thresholds is called the poverty rate. For Franklin County 10.4% of people for whom poverty status was determined lived below the poverty level, compared to 10.8% for the state and 14.1% of the nation.

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 created a county-level living wage calculator. This calculator estimates that for a Franklin County adult to support himself/herself, a living wage would be $12.67 per hour (if assuming a 40 hour work week over 52 weeks, this is an annual salary of $26,354). For a family of two working adults with two children, the calculator estimates a living wage of $16.84 per hour for each adult ($35,027 salary per adult). For a single parent household with two children, it estimates $31.08 per hour ($64,646 salary) as the living wage to support the family. With the current minimum hourly wage rate of $12.75 as of January 1, 2020, only a single adult with no children could support themselves with a living wage according to this calculator.

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). According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average annual pay for jobs in Franklin County in 2018 was $42,487. This annual pay is much lower than the statewide average of $72,606 and the national average of $57,266. Franklin County has consistently had the lowest average annual pay of all counties in Massachusetts since 2001.

Figure 17: Average Annual Pay by Massachusetts Counties, 2018

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Over time, the average annual pay increased in Franklin County by 10% from 2014 through 2018, which was less than the state growth rate (13%) and slightly less than the national rate (11%). This rate of growth was greater than the rate of inflation, which was 6% between 2014 to 2018 (i.e. $1.00 in 2014 was worth $1.06 by 2018). In the coming years, earnings will likely rise as the Massachusetts minimum wage rate increases. As of January 1, 2020, the minimum hourly rate rose from $12.00 to $12.75. The minimum wage rate will continue to increase in steps to reach $15.00 per hour by January 1, 2023.\(^7\)

**Gross Domestic Product**

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the total market value of the goods and services produced within the United States in a quarter or year. Measured by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, the GDP is also estimated at the state and county level. The percent change from one year to the next is an indicator of overall economic growth or contraction. The GDP considers spending by consumers, businesses, and governments as well as the value of exports minus imports.

The table below graphs the “current dollar” GDP, which are estimates based on market prices for that year, so inflation is not a factor when comparing annual data. The data indicates that there was a slight decline (-0.3%) in the value of goods and services at the start of the recession from 2007 to 2009. The orange line in the chart below depicts the percent change from one year to the next year. The decline in annual GDP for Franklin County was in 2008, whereas spikes in the annual percent change are see in 2010 and 2015.

**Figure 18: Gross Domestic Product for Franklin County, and Annual Percent Change**


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Impact of COVID-19: Gross Domestic Product

Current dollar GDP data at the county level is only available annually. However, national GDP data is available quarterly. The figure below depicts the percent change per quarter in national GDP. It depicts the significant decline in GDP experienced in the first quarter (January 1 – March 31) of 2020 due to the economic slowdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 19: United States Gross Domestic Product, Quarterly Percent Change from Q1 2018 to Q1 2020


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>-2.5%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>-4.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Image 4: Sign at Clarkdale Fruit Farm in Deerfield. A fruit farm with retail and pick-your-own operations as well as a wholesale operations for local businesses. Source: FRCOG, 2019.

Industry Sectors

Major industries are those economic sectors that employ a large number of people, and whose significant job gains or losses could impact the overall economic health of the region. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) publishes data on employment and wages for private and public sector employers with Unemployment Insurance coverage. Self-employed workers, agricultural workers on small farms, and others are excluded from this data.

This dataset provides information by the location of the employer and not where the employed resident lives (like the previous labor force and unemployment data found earlier in this chapter). For employers in Franklin County, the data shows that the number of employers steadily increased in recent years and surpassed pre-recession levels. For employment, the number of filled jobs in Franklin County increased after the recession, but had not reached pre-recession levels. The impact to the local and national economy due to the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to result a decline in the number of establishments, overall employment and wages.

Figure 20: Annual Number of Employer Establishments in Franklin County, 2005-2018
Figure 21: Annual Number of Filled Jobs in Franklin County, 2005-2018

Over time, annual wages and the annual average wages per filled job increased every year. However, when adjusting for inflation, the average wages have not significantly increased.

Figure 22: Annual Average Wages and in 2018 Dollars in Franklin County, 2005-2018

Data about the number of employers and filled jobs by industry in Franklin County is in the following figure. The dataset also includes location quotient for sub-industries. A location quotient indicates the concentration of jobs or wages in an industry in comparison to the national average. For example, an LQ of over 1.0 indicates a higher than national average concentration. A high concentration in a particular industry 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 industry.
Health Care & Social Assistance Industry
The Health Care & Social Assistance industry includes hospitals, doctors’ offices, nursing homes, personal care services, and human service organizations. The largest employer in this industry is Baystate Franklin Medical Center in Greenfield.

Within this industry, almost 1/3 of the jobs are in Social Assistance. The location quotient is 1.81 for Social Assistance jobs, which means there is a greater concentration of these jobs in the county than compared to the nation overall.

Health Care & Social Assistance Services consisted of 16.3% of filled jobs in Franklin County in 2018.

Employment Comparison:
↓ Lower than state (18.1%)
↑ Higher than nation (14.9%)

Five-year change:
↑ Employment growth (7%)
↑ Establishment growth (29.6%)
↑ Annual wage growth (20.5%)
Over the past few years, the Health Care & Social Assistance industry has seen steady increase in employers and in job growth. Trends indicate this industry will continue to grow as the population ages and requires greater services. Other factors may impact in the need for greater services, such as increases in the number of people in poverty or experiencing substance use disorders. Occupations within this industry are highlighted as a priority in the Pioneer Valley Labor Market Blueprint, published by the MassHire Franklin-Hampshire and MassHire Hampden County Workforce Boards in early 2018\(^8\). The Blueprint identified critical and emerging industries and occupations within these industries that had a gap in the supply for qualified workers in these positions presently or in the near future. The supply gap could be due to having more position openings than qualified applicants, or due to an increase in employer demand for these workers. For the Health Care and Social Assistance industry, workers in social and human services, clinical and technical positions, and direct care occupations were identified as a need.

**Manufacturing Industry**
Over 13% of all filled jobs and over 16.6% of all wages was in Manufacturing in Franklin County in 2018. This percentage is nearly twice the state’s and nation’s percentages for this industry. In the last five years, the total number of establishments and employees decline by 1%, while the state overall changed by -5% and -3% respectively. The nation also experienced a 1% decline in establishments but a 5% growth in employment. The largest employers in manufacturing are Yankee Candle Company, Inc. in Deerfield and Whately, and Pelican Products, Inc. in Deerfield.

In last five years, the annual payroll increased 9% in Franklin County, 5% in the state, and 14% across the nation during this time. The increases in annual wages are not the result of an increase in the number of employees or inflation. As manufacturers seek to replace retiring experienced employees and new employees require greater skills, wages have increased.

There are select sub-industries within Manufacturing with very high concentrations of employment in Franklin County, compared to the nation. Specifically, they are: Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing, Miscellaneous Manufacturing (which likely includes candle manufacturing), and Paper Manufacturing. Other sub-industries, for beverage and food product manufacturing, are part of a larger farm and food system cluster that is important to the region.

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\(^8\) The Pioneer Valley Labor Market Blueprint is available for download at [www.masshirefhwb.org/labor-market-information/regional-plan](http://www.masshirefhwb.org/labor-market-information/regional-plan).
Companies that use innovative manufacturing processes or produce technologically complex products are described as part of the Advanced Manufacturing cluster. Examples of sub-industries that may be in this cluster are: Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing, and Machinery Manufacturing. Neighboring counties with high employment location quotients for Machinery Manufacturing are Cheshire County, NH (7.84 location quotient) and Windham County, VT (3.55). While Paper Manufacturing has significantly declined in the past few decades, Franklin and Berkshire, Hampden, Hampshire and Worcester counties retain high employment location quotients ranging from 2.42 to 5.59 for this sub-industry.

Table 1: Manufacturing Sub-Industry Employment Data, by Jobs Location Quotient, for Franklin County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manufacturing Sub-industry</th>
<th>Jobs Location Quotient</th>
<th>Number of Filled Jobs</th>
<th>Number of Establishments</th>
<th>Average Wage Per Filled Job</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plastics &amp; Rubber Products</td>
<td>7.54</td>
<td>1,011</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>$66,424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>6.11</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$23,591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$58,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabricated Metal Product</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>$56,666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverage &amp; Tobacco Product</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$37,293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture &amp; Related Product</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$50,773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinery</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$58,871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>$43,978</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, the Pioneer Valley Labor Market Blueprint highlighted Manufacturing as one of the three critical and emerging industries in the region. Production operation occupations identified as a need include: Machinists, First Line Supervisors, Computer-controlled Machine Tool Operators, and Quality Control workers.

Education Services Industry
The Education Services industry includes both public schools, private-educational institutions, and education based businesses and organizations. A significant part of this industry in Franklin County is the independent, secondary schools, such as Deerfield Academy in Deerfield and Northfield Mt. Hermon School in Gill. Six of the independent schools board approximately 2,000 students annually.

The Pioneer Valley Labor Blueprint identified Education Services as critical and emerging industry. The occupations with a gap in the supply of workers are mostly educator and educator support positions in the public K-12 schools.

In the larger 8-county region, there are over 1,200 establishments and 84,000 filled jobs in this industry. In particular, the region is recognized for its concentration of higher educational institutions, including the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The educational institutions also creates opportunities for institutional buying from local businesses, such as locally grown and produced food.

Pioneer Valley Labor Market Blueprint
Developed by the MassHire Franklin Hampshire Workforce Board and the MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board, the 2018-2022 Blueprint reflects an alignment of workforce, economic development and education systems to meet the current and future needs of workers and businesses. The Blueprint identified priority industries and occupations to be the focus of activities and strategic investments in the coming years.

**Priority Industries:**
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Education Services
- Advanced Manufacturing

**Other Critical Industries:**
- Finance and Insurance
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- Accommodation and Food Services
- Agriculture and Sustainable Food Systems

Using data tools from the MA Executive Office of Employment and Workforce Development, an occupational demand analysis was conducted to identify the occupation groups with a short supply of workers in priority and critical industries. The Blueprint recommended actions to address this gap in workers.
Top Occupational Groups in Need of Workers:

- Social/Human Service workers, Direct Care workers including Registered Nurses and others, and Technical/Clinical workers.
- Educators, including Elementary to Post-Secondary and Educator Support.
- Advanced Manufacturing’s First-Line Supervisors, Machinists, Computer Controlled Machine Operators (CNC), and Quality Control Workers.

Retail Trade Industry and Food & Accommodations Services Industry
The Retail Trade industry and Food & Accommodations industry includes 16% of total establishments and 18% of total employment in Franklin County. These industries often have among the lowest average wages per employee of all industries. While often not high paying jobs, these industries offer a range of jobs (including entry-level employment) and opportunities for local business creation and entrepreneurship. These industries play an integral part of the local economy that contribute to an area’s quality of life and can attract new residents. These industries also play a vital role in attracting visitors and the tourism economy. Food and beverage stores, and food service and drinking places are sub-industries that are also part of the region’s farm and food system cluster.

Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation Industry
The Arts, Entertainment and Recreation industry includes performing arts, spectator sports, museums, amusements, and recreation. In 2018, there were 48 establishments and 555 filled jobs. Over the last five years, the number of establishments grew by two and the number of filled jobs declined by seven. The total amount of annual wages grew by 15% during this period. The sub-industry with a very high jobs location quotient was Museums, Historical Sites and Similar Industries with 4.48.
Independent artisans, performers, writers, and other creative economy workers are not captured in this dataset as they are likely to be self-employed. The U.S. Census Bureau produces “non-employer” statistics, which is data about businesses and organizations that have no paid employees but are subject to federal income tax. For Franklin County, there were 6,255 non-employer establishments, of which 665 were in the Arts, Entertainment and Recreation Industry in 2017. In a five-year period, there was a 5.2% increase in establishments and a 17.4% increase in receipts.

Franklin County Creative Economy Project
Greenfield Community College sponsored a study of the Creative Economy, conducted by Michael Kane Consulting in 2019. The study estimated the total number of jobs, self-employed and proprietors operating in the creative industries or are creative workers in other industries to be 3,682 or 9.2% of the Franklin County’s economy.

Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services Industry
Similar to the Arts, Entertainment and Recreation industry, there are more establishments in the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services industry in the non-employer data, than in the Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW). This industry includes services that are specialized or require expertise, such as legal services, accounting, and engineering.

According to the QCEW data in 2018, there were 134 establishments, 534 filled jobs and $29 million in annual wages. In comparison, there were 1,026 non-employer establishments and $33 million in annual wages in 2017. Over the last five years for each dataset, there were decreases in employment and wages in this industry by employers, and increases in non-employer establishments and annual receipts. Independent workers within this industry may seek shared or flexible workspaces that are different from spaces occupied by larger employers. Like other businesses and industries, these workspaces will need to incorporate new social distancing and sanitation protocols in the near term to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.
**Construction Industry**

The Construction Industry is one of the largest industries in terms of employment. According to the QCEW data in 2018, there were 204 establishments, 1,254 filled jobs and $73 million in annual wages. In comparison, there were 764 non-employer establishments and $39 million in annual wages in 2017. Over the last five years for each dataset, there were increases in employment and wages in this industry by employers and slight decreases in non-employer establishments and annual receipts.

**Agricultural Industry**

While not a very large employment industry, agriculture and forestry has a great impact on the landscape of the region and is a critical part of the forest, farm and food system cluster. The best source of data is the U.S. Census of Agriculture, conducted every five years. Over the last decade, the number of farms increased by 12%, and the amount of land in farms grew 11% according to the Census of Agriculture from 2007 to 2017. At the state and national level, the number of farms and land in farms declined in this period.

**Figure 24: Number of Franklin County Farms by Size (in acres)**


![Figure 24: Number of Franklin County Farms by Size (in acres)](image)
Franklin County is important to the agricultural industry in Massachusetts. Franklin County encompasses 9% of the state’s total land area, but has 11% of the farms and 18% of the land in farms for the entire state. In 2017, the market value of products sold was over $68.9 million, which was 14% of the statewide amount. Data on processed or value-added agricultural products sold was included in the 2017 Census of Agriculture for the first time. In Franklin County, over $4.9 million processed or valued-added agricultural products were sold by 104 farms. These products constitute over 11% of the products sold statewide.

A note about employment in this industry, some farms rely on temporary seasonal workers from outside the United States. Some guest workers return to the same farm year after year, applying their skill and experience to the operation. Federal policies on immigration, guest worker programs, and related to the COVID-19 pandemic could impact how workers may or may not be able to come to the region for the first time or return to past employers to work.

In addition to quality agricultural soil and natural environment, Franklin County has access to other key assets that support the Agricultural industry and the forest, farm and food system cluster. For example, an important infrastructure asset is the FCCDC Western Mass. Food Processing Center, a shared commercial kitchen and co-packing facility. Other support includes the PV Grows Investment Fund, which offers financing and technical assistance to agricultural businesses in the region through the FCCDC. CISA provides support to individual farmers as well as the regional agriculture industry. The Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership is an effort to increase natural resource based economic development, to support forest conservation on private lands and the use of sustainable forestry practices, and improve fiscal stability and sustainability of participating municipalities.

Impact of COVID-19: Food Security

The COVID 19 pandemic has brought the issue of food insecurity for individuals and families to the forefront locally and across the Commonwealth. The agricultural businesses and organizations that support the forest, farm and food system cluster in Franklin County can serve a key role in addressing this issue now and for the future. This cluster can play a pivotal role in the production and distribution of local food to meet consumer demand in the broader region. Efforts to support the workforce and meet employer needs, to enhance storage and distribution, and to improve other food system infrastructure are needed to ensure the cluster’s stability and scalability.
Employers
The list of the major employers (see following table) is reflective of the high employment industries found in the region. For example, Baystate Franklin Medical Center is the anchor of Health Care & Social Assistance industry in the region, and Yankee Candle Company, Inc. and Pelican Products Inc. are large manufacturers.

Table 2: Franklin County Major Employers
Source: MA Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Infogroup 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer Name</th>
<th>Primary Location</th>
<th>Range of Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yankee Candle Company, Inc.</td>
<td>Deerfield</td>
<td>1,000 – 4,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baystate Franklin Medical Center</td>
<td>Greenfield</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>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>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>

While major employers are important, most employers in Franklin County have less than 20 employees. According to County Business Patterns, 87% of Franklin County private-sector employers had less than 20 employees in 2017. This percentage is slightly higher than state and national rates.

The layoff or closure of an employer of any size has an obvious direct impact to the workers who are dislocated and also has an indirect effect on related businesses or the level of general economic activity in the region. Recent major closures have included the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Facility in Vernon, VT in 2015 (over 600 jobs lost); Rodney Hunt Company in Orange in 2016 (200 jobs); Turners Falls Paper Company in Montague in 2017 (60 jobs); and Channing Bete Company in Deerfield in 2019 (105 jobs); and the Redemption Christian Academy in Northfield in 2019.

Small Business is Big
87% of private-sector employers in Franklin County have less than 20 employees.

Higher than the state (84%) and nation (85%)
Regional Clusters

The North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) defines the industries described in the previous section. This classification system groups business and other entities that are similar in what they produce and how they produce it. The EDA encourages economic development strategies that seek to grow specific “clusters” in a region. The term “cluster” was defined by Professor Michael 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. As a result, a cluster may include businesses from different industry sectors. The premise of the strategy is that by each region having its own successful clusters based on the its competitive advantages, job growth and economic activity will be generated in that region while also contributing to a stronger, more diversified national economy.

The EDA has funded an online tool to provide regions with data to help them improve their economic competitiveness by understanding their clusters in relation to the relative strengths of the nation. The U.S. Cluster Mapping Project, has 16 definitions for “local” clusters (clusters that primarily serve only the local market) and 51 definitions for “traded” clusters (clusters that serve markets outside of the region). The tool measures the clusters’ strengths in comparison to other areas across the country. The most recent data available is from 2017.

The U.S. Cluster Mapping tool identified the largest employment traded clusters in Franklin County in 2017, as seen in the flowing figure. It also identified the traded clusters determined to be particularly strong in comparison to other counties across the country due to high employment specialization. It should be noted that the title of some 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.” As a result, this cluster likely includes candle production.

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9 For more information: [www.isc.hbs.edu/competitiveness-economic-development/frameworks-and-key-concepts/Pages/clusters.aspx](http://www.isc.hbs.edu/competitiveness-economic-development/frameworks-and-key-concepts/Pages/clusters.aspx)
10 U.S. Cluster Mapping Project: [www.clustermapping.us](http://www.clustermapping.us)
11 U.S. Cluster Mapping Project, Cluster by Cluster Definitions (Traded), June 2014, [www.clustermapping.us](http://www.clustermapping.us)
Figure 25: Top Traded Clusters by Employment in 2017 in Franklin County

The QCEW dataset used in this chapter describes industries and the U.S. Cluster Mapping tool provides useful information and a data-driven perspective on the emerging and important clusters in the county. This information combined with local knowledge was used to identify key clusters specific to Franklin County and highlighted in this Plan.

Table 3: Franklin County’s Key Industries & Clusters
Source: CEDS Committee, 2020

Franklin County’s Key Industries & Clusters

- Creative Economy
- Education Services
- Forest, Farm and Food System
- Healthcare and Social Assistance
- Advanced Manufacturing, including plastic products and precision machining
- Outdoor/Adventure Recreation and Cultural Tourism
- Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
Infrastructure Assets Other Factors Related to Economic Performance

Power and Telecommunications
Access to power is essential infrastructure. Electric distribution is provided by Eversource or National Grid, depending on the community. Consumers have the option to select their electricity generation provider. According to the Energy Information Administration (EIA), the 2018 average retail price for electricity in Massachusetts was the second highest in the country, after Hawaii and Alaska\(^\text{12}\). Massachusetts is not alone, as each of the other New England states have high rates in compared to other areas of the continental United States. For example, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire follow Massachusetts.

Also 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. Natural gas fired electricity is the largest source of energy used in the Commonwealth. For individual consumers, five communities (Deerfield, Greenfield, Montague, Sunderland and Whately) are served by Berkshire Gas Company infrastructure for natural gas. A moratorium on new natural gas service went into effect in 2018.

Alternative sources for power generation, such as solar and wind have grown significantly in recent years. By March 2019, Massachusetts was ranked fifth in the nation in installed solar photovoltaic generation capacity\(^\text{13}\).

In Franklin County, there were 2,452 solar photovoltaic systems registered as of November 2019, according to the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center\(^\text{14}\). The capacity of these systems was over 57,330 DC, kW.


\(^{13}\) Ibid.

\(^{14}\) Solar PV System in MA Report, Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, November 1, 2019, [www.masscec.com](http://www.masscec.com)
Access to a reliable, redundant and affordable broadband network is critical for communities to thrive, economies to become high performing, and for individuals to have equal opportunity. There is an ever-increasing assumption of broadband access, which puts our region’s residents and businesses at a disadvantage.

Franklin County, like other areas of western Massachusetts, has significant assets and gaps in this important network. MassBroadband 123 is an open access, fiber-optic, “middle mile” network that connects municipalities 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. Multiple internet service providers (ISPs) use this network to offer services to Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs) 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 greater region has a next generation middle mile network, there remain communities without broadband access at the “last mile”. Efforts are underway in each unserved community to resolve this lack of access. 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 currently pursuing fiber-to-the-premise (FTTP), new cable system franchises, or wireless last mile networks. As of 2020, three Franklin County towns have operational FTTP systems, and seven more towns have FTTP projects underway. One Franklin County town has an operational wireless network and two more towns have wireless projects underway.

For more information about MassBroadband 123, go to www.broadband.masstech.org.
Depending on the cost of the broadband technology selected, communities were required to provide a local contribution in addition to State resources to fund the creation of a system. Towns deploying FTTP systems are required to provide a significant local contribution, which is a large investment for these small towns. For example, the Town of Charlemont has been awarded $960,000 in state grant funds to construct a FTTP the system, and has been approved to borrow up to $1.75 million to complete the project\(^1\). For a town of approximately 1,200 people and an annual municipal budget in FY20 of less than $4 million, this is a significant investment. This level of investment is not unique among the towns investing in last mile broadband. The economic impacts of COVID-19 will impact not only individuals and businesses, but also municipal governments. Securing resources to reduce or eliminate the cost burden on municipalities for infrastructure investment is a strategy that can bolster the economic health of these communities.

### Water and Wastewater Systems
Public water and wastewater systems are another vital infrastructure. In densely populated areas, these systems are critical for residential and business development, and to protect human health and the environment. Only 13 of the 26 Franklin County 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. Fifteen municipalities have public water systems in select areas. Public water suppliers as well as

\[^1\] Town of Charlemont website, [http://charlemont-ma.us/broadband-initiative-charlemont](http://charlemont-ma.us/broadband-initiative-charlemont)
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.

Businesses, like restaurants, seeking to locate in a village center may be prevented due to the lack of water or wastewater systems. As noted in the 2019 Massachusetts Rural Policy Plan, private wells and septic systems can be prohibitively expensive to build and State rules require sufficient land area and topography to accommodate their installation, which may not be available in dense areas. However, the expense of constructing, operating and maintaining these systems are a challenge for many small communities.

**Business Development Systems**
There is a robust ecosystem of programs and organizations that support business investment and entrepreneurship in Franklin County. For lending and finance, local and regionally based banks offer traditional commercial financing. Non-traditional lenders, like the Franklin County Community Development Corporation’s (FCCDC) lending program or Common Capital, often offer flexible terms and are a good source for gap financing in cooperation with traditional lenders.

The FCCDC also provides direct technical assistance and business planning workshops, administers a business lending program, and operates the Western Mass. Food Processing Center (a commercial kitchen) and the Venture Center (a business incubator). In addition, FCCDC administers the PV Grows Investment Fund to support farm and food businesses.

To support workforce and skills development the MassHire Franklin/Hampshire Regional Employment Board in Greenfield is the workforce investment board for the region. They develop training programs on behalf of businesses and industry seeking a workforce with specific skills or knowledge. The MassHire Franklin/Hampshire Career Center works with individuals seeking employment and employers seeking to find workers. For employers, they post positions, provide labor market data, help plan job fairs, and provide pre-screening and recruitment assistance.

A variety of co-working and business incubators operate in the region that can provide shared space for self-employed or employees working remotely. Sector-specific facilities range from Another Castle, a co-working space for game designers, artists and developers, to the Western Mass. Food Processing Center, a food business incubator and shared commercial kitchen. New maker-spaces are being opened to help existing artisans and craftspeople or individuals interested in learning new skills or starting new businesses. Facilities include LaunchSpace in Orange, and The Hive and LAVA Center in Greenfield.
Child Care and Elder Services

Most workers with young children will require access to child care services that fits the needs of their employment location and schedule. The temporary closure of non-emergency child care services due to the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted both the importance of this industry as well as its instability. When service providers reopen, there are concerns about capacity as facilities may have to adjust the number of children present and/or may incur costs to accommodate new guidelines to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. These conditions could exacerbate existing challenges.

According to a 2018 report by the Center for American Progress, 53% of Massachusetts residents live in a child care desert. They define a child care desert as “any census tract with more than 50 children under age 5 that contains either no child care providers or so few options that there are more than three times as many children as licensed child care slots”. The Massachusetts Rural Policy Plan acknowledged the limited access to child care as an area of concern for the rural workforce. It stated that access to early education/child care services in rural areas is a significant barrier for current and prospective workers, and recommended increasing the Commonwealth’s child care reimbursement rate policies to allow for-profit and non-profit providers to pay workers more, which would incentivize more people to work in the industry.

Another challenge many workers may face when balancing employment and family is elder care. As the number of people who are age 65 years and older increases, more workers may have to take on caregiving responsibilities and/or seek quality, affordable elder care services. Over time, some families may choose residential based elder care. Again, the COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the importance of access to home care services, nursing homes and other group residential facilities and the challenge to mitigate the spread of the virus.

Incentive and Preferred Purchasing Programs

The incentive programs offered by local, state or federal governments can help make a business or development project financially feasible. This is particularly important for projects proposed in areas with low real estate values or low lease rates.

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. Projects that meet certain

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19 Information about EDIP at www.mass.gov/edip
eligibility criteria may also apply for state tax incentives as well. Both local agreements and state tax incentives through this program require approval by the Massachusetts Economic Assistance Coordinating Council.

Tax credit programs allow a developer to lower the amount of taxes owed or raise capital for a project. At the state level, there are tax credit programs available based on the type of project.

- The Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit program is managed by the Massachusetts Historic Commission.\(^{20}\) Certified rehabilitation projects on income-producing properties are eligible to receive up to 20% of the cost of certified rehabilitation expenditures in state tax credits.

- The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection administers the state’s Brownfields Tax Credit Program, which can help fund eligible clean-up costs for hazardous substances.\(^{21}\)

- The Low Income Housing Tax Credit is a federal program administered by the state’s Department of Housing and Community Development.\(^{22}\) Awarded tax credits can be used to raise capital for projects creating affordable rental housing in qualified census tracts.

Another tax credit program is funded by the federal government and targets investment in distressed communities. Called the New Market Tax Credit (NMTC) program, it is operated by the U.S. Department of Treasury and managed by participating Community Development Financial Institutions (CFDI).\(^{23}\) A CFDI can allocate federal tax credits to certified organizations for specific projects located in eligible Census Tracts. Eligible Census Tracts are located in Downtown Greenfield, Turners Falls, and the towns of Erving, Orange, Warwick and Wendell. While tax credit programs are complex to navigate, they

Image 7: First National Bank Building in Greenfield. An historic downtown building owned by the Greenfield Redevelopment Authority. The available property is in a Census Tract that is NTMC eligible and a designated Opportunity Zone. Source: FRCOG, 2020

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\(^{20}\) Information about MA Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits at [www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhctax/taxidx.htm](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhctax/taxidx.htm)

\(^{21}\) Information about Brownfields Tax Credits at [www.mass.gov/service-details/brownfields-tax-credit-btc](http://www.mass.gov/service-details/brownfields-tax-credit-btc)

\(^{22}\) Information about Low Income Housing Tax Credits at [www.mass.gov/service-details/low-income-housing-tax-credit-lihtc](http://www.mass.gov/service-details/low-income-housing-tax-credit-lihtc)

\(^{23}\) Information about NMTC at [www.cdfifund.gov/programs-training/Programs/new-markets-tax-credit/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.cdfifund.gov/programs-training/Programs/new-markets-tax-credit/Pages/default.aspx)
The federal U.S. Tax Cut and Jobs Act of 2017 created a new program to encourage private investment into economically distressed communities. As described by the Internal Revenue Service, the Opportunity Zone (OZ) program allows individuals to defer taxable income from capital gains by investing those gains into an Opportunity Fund. This fund is a private partnership or corporation that invests in projects or businesses located in designated OZ areas. In 2018, the U.S. Treasury Department certified Census Tracts in 13 Franklin County communities as OZ.

Both the state and federal government offer programs to encourage governmental agencies or those with government contracts to buy goods and services from the private sector. The state’s Supplier Diversity Office has a program that can certify companies as minority, women, veteran, or Portuguese business enterprises as well as a Small Business Purchasing Program. The goal of these programs is to increase opportunities for participating businesses to sell their goods and services to state agencies.

Certified small businesses located in designated HUBZone areas are eligible to compete for select federal contracts. To qualify, businesses must have its principal office and 35% of its employees living in a HUBZone area. In Franklin County, select areas in Downtown Greenfield, Turners Falls and parts of Orange are designated HUBZone areas.

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24 Information about Opportunity Zones at [www.cdfifund.gov/Pages/Opportunity-Zones.aspx](http://www.cdfifund.gov/Pages/Opportunity-Zones.aspx)
25 Information about Supplier Diversity Office at [www.mass.gov/supplier-diversity-office](http://www.mass.gov/supplier-diversity-office)
26 Information about HUBZone at [www.sba.gov/federal-contracting/contracting-assistance-programs/hubzone-program](http://www.sba.gov/federal-contracting/contracting-assistance-programs/hubzone-program)
Chapter 3: Economic Resiliency

Economic resilience is described 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. Economic shocks or disruptions can be from environmental or man-made sources, or be a significant shift in the economy that causes significant temporary or permanent job losses, business closures or reductions in economic activity.

Table 4: Types of Vulnerabilities
Source: FEMA, NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, and FRCOG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental</th>
<th>Man-made</th>
<th>Economic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dam failure</td>
<td>Biological threat pandemic</td>
<td>Major recession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drought</td>
<td>Chemical threat</td>
<td>Closure of a major employer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earthquake</td>
<td>Radiation and nuclear threat</td>
<td>Significant decline in an industry or cluster</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>Other hazardous material threat</td>
<td>Substantial decline in total labor force</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flood</td>
<td>Active threat, such as terrorism</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Heat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hurricane</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Landslide</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tornado or micro-burst</td>
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<tr>
<td>Severe winter storm</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Virus pandemic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wildfire</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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. In the past ten years, there have been two major disaster declarations in Franklin County. According to FEMA, a severe storm and snowstorm was declared for Franklin County and five other counties in October 2011; and Tropical Storm Irene was declared for Franklin and Berkshire County in August 2011. Over $30 million in public assistance grants and $5.5 million for individuals and households was obligated due to Tropical Storm Irene. In addition to these events, Franklin County was impacted by the global pandemic in spring 2020. On March 27, 2020, a major disaster declaration was federally declared for Massachusetts due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

When a disaster first strikes, the health and safety of people and the protection of property are paramount concerns. The emergency response to these important public safety concerns are coordinated by state and federal agencies, and at the regional level through programs administered by the FRCOG (such as the Franklin County Regional Emergency Planning Committee, Western Massachusetts Homeland Security Council, and the Western

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Massachusetts Medical and Health Coordinating Coalition), and at the local level by municipal departments. This chapter focuses on resilience as it relates to the economy and business community, as opposed to public safety.

In Chapter 6 of this document, Goal 7 reflects the importance of economic resilience. It states that the goal is to enact measures and planning efforts to ensure regional resilience to recover quickly from, withstand and avoid economic shocks. The corresponding objectives and Action Plan activities reflect two types of initiatives. Steady-state initiatives are long term efforts to help regions withstand, avoid or recover from an event. Responsive initiatives seek to respond and assist recovery in the short-term following an event.

**Steady-State Initiatives**

Long-term observations across the globe indicate the climate is changing. The climate stressors that will predominantly impact people, the environment and the local economy are changes in precipitation, rising temperatures and extreme weather events, such as ice storms, flooding and drought. Other stressors, such as a pandemic or man-made disasters, compound the challenge and must also be considered. Incorporating resiliency in economic development is important to mitigate impacts from these stressors on human health and safety, business productivity, and key infrastructure.

Planning programs at the local and regional level evaluate vulnerability and identify needs to address these potential impacts. FRCOG staff work with Franklin County municipalities to update local hazard mitigation plans. These plans identify infrastructure needs that, if improved, can lessen the impact of a natural disaster. For example, 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.

The Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grant program supports municipalities in identifying vulnerabilities and prioritizing actions to build resilience. Grant funds are available to complete the planning process and, once designated, to apply for grants to implement projects from the plan. In Franklin County, eight towns have been designated MVP communities and eleven towns were awarded a grant to become designated.

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All but two Franklin County municipalities have become designated Green Communities by the Commonwealth. Communities become designated through a process that has them commit to take actions that will reduce long-term energy needs and support renewable energy and energy efficiency. These communities are then eligible for technical assistance and grants to implement clean energy projects.

To address economic shifts, economic development planning can recommend actions to reduce the dominance of a single industry. By increasing the diversity of businesses in the region, the closure of a major employer or a significant decline in a single industry could be absorbed by growth in other sectors. Similarly, increasing the level of private sector employment will balance the high levels of employment in the region’s non-profit and government sectors.

A task identified in the Action Plan of this document is to better align economic development resilience best practices with local planning efforts through state programs, such as Green Communities, hazard mitigation plans, and MVP plans.

**Responsive Initiatives**

The recent experience from the COVID-19 pandemic presents the opportunity to examine regional response, and evaluate the resources that were available or needed. A task identified in the Action Plan is to examine the recent experience and develop strategies to improve response and recovery, including improving communication and support to business community, coordination about regional organizations and resources.
Chapter 4: SWOT Analysis

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis identifies advantageous and disadvantageous factors from within and outside the region that influence economic development in Franklin County. Factors were identified from a review of the region’s economic conditions and input from the CEDS Committee.

### Strengths for Economic and Community Development

- Proximity and transportation access to major markets
- Scenic rural landscape and abundant natural resources, including forest and farmland
- High quality of life, access to recreation and cultural activities
- Highly educated and productive workforce
- Strong support for locally owned businesses and products
- Region is not dependent on single industry or employer; diversity of businesses
- Growth of self-employment, entrepreneurship, and gig economy
- Strong manufacturing clusters offering quality employment opportunities
- Expanding healthcare and social assistance sector, with investments in new facilities and with leadership in addressing substance use disorders
- Strong education services sector, including the presence of independent schools and higher educational institutions in broader region
- Growth of agriculture-based businesses
- Presence of infrastructure and programmatic assets to support forest, farm and food system
- Commitment to sustainability and resiliency
- Strong economic and workforce development infrastructure, including access to non-traditional capital, and entrepreneurial and skills training programs.
- Collaborative environment among communities and regional organizations
- Strong organizational assets in renewable energy/energy efficiency industry
- Robust and integrated emergency preparedness and first responder community
- Regional designation as an Economic Development District
- Opportunity Zone designation of seven Census Tracts located in 12 towns
**Weaknesses for Economic and Community Development**

- Stagnant population trends and projected population decline
- Older overall population, resulting in a large segment of the workforce and of business owners approaching retirement age
- Declining number of the school age population and low school enrollment impacting public K-12 school systems
- Small percentage of population are people of color
- Lower wages paid to employees, compared to other regions
- Lower percentage of health care providers in rural areas
- Barriers to employment, including limited access to public transit services and available, affordable childcare
- Need for greater digital literacy
- Lack of developable or ready to use industrial space
- Cost for construction or redevelopment is high in relation to real estate market value
- Mismatch in housing stock and housing needs due to lack of housing production, housing condition and age, and changing demographics
- Higher energy costs, compared to other regions in the country
- Lack of “last mile” broadband access in some communities
- Lack of public water and/or wastewater systems
- Limited available capacity and resources for municipalities to pursue economic development projects and invest in infrastructure
## Opportunities for Economic and Community Development

- Presence of MassBroadband 123 fiber network, and state funds committed to invest in last mile infrastructure in unserved areas
- Increase in percentage of population who are people of color, in particular people of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity
- MA Governor’s Administration and Legislature recognizing the needs of rural areas more than in the past
- Developable land in the region
- Potential to redevelopment brownfield sites
- Passenger rail expansion
- Growth of ventures structured as co-operative businesses
- Younger workforce attracted to region’s quality of life and opportunity for self-employment and entrepreneurship
- Expansion of forest, farm and food product opportunities
- Potential to earn income from ecological goods and services provided by the region
- Building of career pathways in healthcare and social services
- Lower housing costs compared to surrounding communities
- Opportunity to implement municipal vulnerability plan recommendations to address resiliency
- Potential shift of people moving from urban areas to rural communities after the COVID-19 pandemic crisis
### Threats for Economic and Community Development

- Declining population in northeastern area of Commonwealth, while the metropolitan eastern area is managing significant population growth
- Decline school age children population challenges the ability of communities to maintain local schools and education programs
- Decrease in migrant workforce
- Low percent of residents work in private for-profit enterprises, with greater percentage working for non-profit and government enterprises
- As owners retire, the potential closure of established businesses or acquisition by entities headquartered outside the region
- Uncertainty of public funding levels that may impact services, infrastructure investment and employment in non-profit and government sectors
- Aging farmers / farm leadership retiring
- Limited recognition of Franklin County as a destination for business and tourism, in comparison to other regions
- Substance use disorder trends
- Ability for small businesses to support a living wage
- Threat of online retailers on local small business operations, or the “Amazon” effect
- Accessibility of downtown areas for aging population
- Challenge for rural communities to fund and implement projects, due to lack of capacity and resources and being at a disadvantage when applying for state and federal programs
- Challenge to access government and public services due to consolidation of service centers (such as having no Social Security Administration office and no full service MA Department of Transitional Assistance office for residents to access benefits) and/or due to funding formulas that do not provide a floor level of funding (such as for the MassHire Franklin Hampshire Career Center)
- More frequent severe weather events and their impacts to regional assets and economic activity
- Social and economic impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic on individuals and families, businesses, non-profit organizations, and municipal governments
- Municipal debt burden and operation costs for publicly funded last mile broadband
- Employ sustainable development strategies to manage growth, if there is a shift in population patterns after pandemic crisis
Chapter 5: Vision Statement

The purpose of economic development is create an environment that supports existing ventures and new entrepreneurs; provides the necessary infrastructure, spaces and systems to help the business community thrive; and enhances the skills and talents of the local workforce. This vision statement was developed by the CEDS Committee and guides the strategic direction of the 2020 CEDS Plan to pursue successful economic development in Franklin County now and for the future.

The 2020 CEDS Plan supports initiatives that ....

- Welcome and encourage younger and ethnically diverse people to live and work in the region.
- Leverage the region’s intrinsic and emerging assets to create economic opportunity in a manner that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- Result in quality, living wage jobs.
- Holistically consider the needs of the workforce, including education, housing, transportation, childcare and overall health.
- Foster the growth of businesses from within the region and across economic sectors.
- Promote resiliency from economic shocks.
- Address rural investment inequity, and strive for greater public and private investment in the region.
- Leverage collaboration and build capacity among strategic partners located within and surrounding Franklin County.
- Ultimately, create a region that is vibrant, sustainable, equitable and inclusive.

Image 8: Bridge of Flowers in Shelburne Falls. This transformed trolley bridge is a top visitor attraction in the region. Source: FRCOG, 2020.

Chapter 6: Goals, Objectives and Action Plan

The following goals and objectives were developed by the CEDS Committee and FRCOG staff based on the Plan’s vision statement, summary background and SWOT analysis. They were developed to be highly relevant to the needs and advantages of this region, and will have a meaningful impact on the region’s near term economic recovery resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and future economy.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1. To implement the CEDS planning framework effectively and efficiently.

Objectives:

A. Engage collaborative economic development networks in the region and outside the region to enhance capacity and leverage resources.

B. Provide technical assistance and/or connect resources to assist local and regional partners with moving priority projects forward.

C. Satisfy requirements of U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) Planning Partnership award.

Goal 2. Implement efforts to sustainably grow the population of Franklin County and to make Franklin County a more welcoming and inclusive place.

Objective:

A. Examine and strategize how to overcome workplace cultures that create structural and institutional barriers to equity.

B. Provide technical assistance to implement local planning that encourages sustainable growth and economic development, and enhances the overall health and quality of life of the region.

Goal 3. Create conditions for entrepreneurs, business owners and their employees to be resilient and succeed.

Objectives:

A. Enhance access to business technical assistance and access capital to entrepreneurs and business owners, including access to resources and support to recover from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

B. Encourage connections to supportive networks, such as facilitating cooperation among business groups and fostering collaborative workspaces.
Goal 4. Cultivate important or emerging clusters that will enhance the quality of life and work opportunities for current and new residents.

Objective:

A. Support CEDS projects and partner initiatives that enhance the following clusters:
   o Creative economy
   o Education services
   o Forest, farm and food system
   o Healthcare and social assistance
   o Advanced manufacturing
   o Outdoor/adventure recreation and cultural tourism
   o Renewable energy and energy efficiency

Goal 5. Target investment in infrastructure to encourage the creation of sustainable, resilient and vibrant communities, and to reduce barriers to access employment and the movement of goods and services.

Objectives:

A. Address downtown and village center needs to encourage and accommodate managed growth, such as water/wastewater systems, Complete Streets, and culvert assessments.
B. Support the redevelopment of brownfield properties through assessment, remediation and site preparation.
C. Increase the amount of planned industrial/business park land available, and encourage its development applying smart growth principles.
D. Advocate for continued deployment of last mile broadband infrastructure in unserved areas, for better leveraging of the MassBroadband 123 middle mile network, and for education to encourage greater adoption of digital technology and online tools.
E. Support investment in transportation infrastructure and operations, including for roads, bridges, passenger rail and public transit, to facilitate connections within the region and to areas outside of the region.

Goal 6. Encourage pathways to economic security for individuals, and equitable wealth creation and financial security in the region.

Objectives:

A. Enhance access to training, education, advancement opportunities and career services.
B. Improve access to services that reduce barriers and support successful employment, such as public transit, childcare, food security, and help for substance use disorders.
C. Increase the availability of safe, quality housing that is within the means of owners and tenants, including affordable, workforce and market rate housing options.
D. Sustain an entrepreneurship eco-system that supports individuals and cooperatives in successfully launching and growing business ventures.

Goal 7. Enact measures and planning efforts to ensure regional resilience to recover quickly from, withstand and avoid economic shocks.

Objectives:

A. Inventory and prioritize infrastructure and system investments, including transportation, food security, workforce development and more, to meet the needs of the most vulnerable populations, recover the economy from impacts of COVID-19 and transform the regional economy to be more resilient.

B. Examine the experience from the COVID-19 pandemic and develop strategies to advance the response and recovery from economic shocks.

C. Align local and regional hazard mitigation, sustainability, vulnerability, and emergency preparedness planning efforts with economic development goals.

Action Plan

The Action Plan describes the projects to be pursued over the next five years as part of the CEDS planning program. Each project proposes to enhance one or more of Franklin County’s key industries or clusters as well as meet one or more of the Plan’s goals and objectives.

Projects and activities were identified by program partners and submitted through an open solicitation process. In early January 2020, an invitation to submit proposals was distributed to the 26 municipal governments of Franklin County and 37 non-profit and governmental entities that support economic development in the region. By March, over 30 proposals were submitted. Due to changing conditions as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic impacts, additional proposals were accepted or revised after the initial March submittal deadline. A copy of the proposal profile form used to collect project information is included in the appendix.

All of the projects in the Action Plan how to meet minimum criteria to be considered for inclusion, such as: to be implemented by a governmental entity or non-profit organization; to result in the creation or retention of jobs; to spur business growth or increase private investment; and to require some form of public investment to be feasible. In total, there are 50

Franklin County Key Industries & Clusters
- Creative Economy
- Education Services
- Forest, Farm and Food System
- Healthcare and Social Assistance
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Outdoor/Adventure Recreation and Cultural Tourism
- Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
projects listed in the Action Plan in order of how they correspond to specific goals and objectives. Of these projects, thirteen with particular potential for regional impact are highlighted. It should be noted that not all projects and activities in the Action Plan are eligible for EDA funding opportunities or have funding sources identified yet. Additional project development work is needed to confirm cost estimates and funding sources.

The Action Plan includes the following for each project or activity.

**Goal:** The applicable goal(s) and objective(s) this project or activity seeks to achieve.

**Category:** One of six project or activity types:
- Infrastructure – an investment in a physical asset and/or organizational structure, such as a road, transit, water or wastewater, utilities, etc.
- Development or redevelopment of a structure or property
- Cluster development - a study to enhance an identified priority cluster
- Programmatic support - resources for staffing or program development
- Capitalization – capitalization and administration of grant or revolving loan funds for small businesses
- Advocacy – active engagement to encourage or promote a policy, program or project

**Location:** The site or primary area to be served.

**Project:** The title and brief description of the project or activity.

**Lead and Partners:** The lead organization to implement the project, with identified project partners.

**Phase:** This section describes the next phase of the project for which support is presently being sought to pursue. Often to complete a project multiple phases may be required. As projects like these progress, the phase will change over time.
- Pre-planning– support needed for initial planning and proposal development
- Planning– support needed for planning or feasibility study, market analysis, business plan, conceptual designs, or similar activity
- Pre-development - support needed for design, engineering, permitting, and similar tasks requires before development
- Development or Implementation– support needed to fund construction or implementation
- Other – to be specified

**Proposed Funding Source** – The proposed funding source to fund the current phase of the project, if known.

**Highlighted Projects** - Projects with the greatest potential for transformative regional impact.
**Action Plan Acronym Guide:**

- CAPV – Community Action Pioneer Valley
- CDBG – Community Development Block Grant
- DLTA – MA District Local Technical Assistance program
- DRWA – Deerfield River Watershed Association
- 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
- FCCC – Franklin County Chamber of Commerce
- FCCDC – Franklin County Community Development Corporation
- FCTS – Franklin County Technical School
- FCRHRA – Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority
- FREDI – Franklin Regional Economic Development Initiative
- FRCOG – Franklin Regional Council of Governments
- FRTA – Franklin Regional Transit Authority
- GCC – Greenfield Community College
- GRA – Greenfield Redevelopment Authority
- MassDOT – Massachusetts Department of Transportation
- MBI – Massachusetts Broadband Institute
- MDI – Massachusetts Downtown Initiative
- MGCC – Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation
- MHFHCC – MassHire Franklin Hampshire Career Center
- MHFHWB - MassHire Franklin Hampshire Workforce Board
- MOTT – Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism
- MTWP – Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership
- MVP – Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Program
- RPAC – Massachusetts Rural Policy Advisory Commission
- USDA – United States Department of Agriculture
### 2020-2024 CEDS Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal:</th>
<th>Location:</th>
<th>Project:</th>
<th>Lead, and Partners:</th>
<th>Phase:</th>
<th>Potential Funding:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal 1-A</td>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td><strong>CEDS Planning Program</strong> - Staff will complete the scope of work and reporting requirements of the EDA Partnership Planning award.</td>
<td>FRCOG</td>
<td>Development/Implementation</td>
<td>EDA, FRCOG assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 1-A</td>
<td>Franklin County to Statewide</td>
<td><strong>Regional and Statewide Economic Development Networks</strong> - Staff participation and leadership in collaborative capacity building and leveraging of resources with the CEDS Committee, Franklin Regional Economic Development Initiative (FREDI), the Economic Development Partners group of western Mass, the MA CEDS/EDD Practitioners group, and the Rural Policy Advisory Commission.</td>
<td>FRCOG, and FREDI partners</td>
<td>Development/Implementation</td>
<td>EDA, FRCOG assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 2-A</td>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td><strong>Strengthening Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Franklin County Project</strong> - Develop and encourage adaption of workplace policies and practices to deconstruct white dominance, identify and reduce bias, and facilitate the hiring of people of color and people from other marginalized groups, and to ensure workplaces are welcoming and healthy for everyone.</td>
<td>FCCDC, and FRCOG, GCC, FCCC, and more.</td>
<td>Development/Implementation</td>
<td>MA Health Resources in Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 2-B</td>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td><strong>Local Technical Assistance</strong> - Staff to provide planning technical assistance to municipalities, such as through an updated zoning bylaws and subdivision regulations, Master Plan, Open Space and Recreation Plan, village center studies, and similar planning efforts.</td>
<td>FRCOG, with participating municipalities</td>
<td>Development/Implementation</td>
<td>DLTA, MDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 2-B, Goal 7-A</td>
<td>Western Mass or Statewide</td>
<td><strong>Growth Management Strategy</strong> - Advocate for a study of infrastructure, regulations and employment needs to accommodate and welcome people moving from urban to rural communities.</td>
<td>RPAC, and FRCOG and participating RPAs</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal: Goal 3-A, Goal 4-A</td>
<td>Location: MTWP Region</td>
<td>Project: <strong>MTWP Forest Center</strong> - Create and operate a center to provide tourism services; sustainable forestry practices technical assistance to landowners; research and development to address climate change, invasive species or develop new wood based products; marketing and a gallery; and public education about the ecological benefits of forest management.</td>
<td>Lead, and Partners: MTWP Governing Board</td>
<td>Phase: Planning</td>
<td>Potential Funding: EOEEA, EDA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 3-A, Goal 4-A</td>
<td>MTWP Region</td>
<td><strong>MTWP Revolving Loan Fund</strong> - Capitalize a small business revolving loan fund for natural resource based and forest dependent based businesses for the 21-town MTWP region.</td>
<td>MTWP Governing Board</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>MA EOEEA, EDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 3-A, Goal 7-A</td>
<td>Western Mass</td>
<td><strong>Northern Tier 2.0</strong> - Provide technical assistance, counseling and coaching for small businesses, and employ innovative collaborations to build capacity. As part of this project, the technical assistance will target businesses and industries particularly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.</td>
<td>FCCDC, and business assistance groups</td>
<td>Development/ Implementation</td>
<td>EDA, MGCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 3-A, Goal 7-A</td>
<td>Western Mass</td>
<td><strong>Capitalize Small Business Revolving Loan Fund</strong> - Re-capitalizing the existing fund to invest in small businesses and to address the increase need for capital in businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.</td>
<td>FCCDC</td>
<td>Development/ Implementation</td>
<td>EDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 3-A, Goal 7-A</td>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td><strong>Business Investment Funds</strong> - Establish flexible, unrestricted small business grant and/or loan funds to work in collaboration with municipal CDBG and private investment sources to support businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.</td>
<td>FCCDC, and participating municipalities and private investors</td>
<td>Development/ Implementation</td>
<td>CDBG, Private investors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 3-B, Goal 4-A</td>
<td>Orange</td>
<td><strong>LaunchSpace's North Quabbin Program</strong> - Start-up support for the multi-studio makerspace program in the Orange Innovation Center.</td>
<td>LaunchSpace Inc.</td>
<td>Development/ Implementation</td>
<td>EDA, MassDevelop ment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 3-B, Goal 6-D</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td><strong>GCC Rural Innovation Center</strong> – The Center’s pillars include sustainable agriculture, entrepreneurship and small business, older adults, opioid crisis and health care, and the creative economy; and the renovation of the GCC Downtown building.</td>
<td>GCC, GCC Foundation, and Green Space Cowork</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>EDA, To be announced</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 4-A</td>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td><strong>Creative Economy Development Project</strong> - Create a plan to evolve the region's Creative Economy through education, marketing and a coordinated retailer-producer network.</td>
<td>GCC, CISA, FCCDC, FCCC, Arts Hub Initiative, Cultural Districts and Councils, and local business associations.</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>EDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 4-A</td>
<td>Deerfield River Corridor</td>
<td><strong>Deerfield River Outdoor Recreation Asset and Economic Development Plan</strong> - A comprehensive assessment and plan to recommend river access management strategies, infrastructure development, and tourism outreach.</td>
<td>DRWA, and businesses, municipalities, MA DCR, Franklin Conservation District, Connecticut River Conservancy, and Trout Unlimited</td>
<td>Pre-planning</td>
<td>EDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 4-A</td>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td><strong>CiderDays Economic Impact Study</strong> - Assess the economic impact of CiderDays locally and determine the impact it has had on the local and national craft cider movement.</td>
<td>FCCC</td>
<td>Development/Implementation</td>
<td>EDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 4-A, Goal 5-B</td>
<td>Orange</td>
<td><strong>Putnam Cottages Village</strong> - Creation of an innovative, downtown development of commercial cottages on a town-owned brownfields site.</td>
<td>Town of Orange</td>
<td>Pre-development</td>
<td>MassWorks, PARC, MassDevelop ment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 4-A, Goal 7-A</td>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td><strong>Food Security Infrastructure</strong> - Creation of regional shared infrastructure assets to support local food production, processing, storage and distribution.</td>
<td>FCCDC, MHFHWB, CISA, and additional partners</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>EDA, MA EOEEA, Private foundations</td>
</tr>
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<td>Goal:</td>
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<td>Goal 5-A</td>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td>Franklin County Public Water/Sewer System Strategic Plan - Create a region-wide plan to determine the feasibility of systems in unserved village centers; prioritize capital improvements needed for existing systems; and estimate costs to construct, maintain and operate systems in rural communities while assessing the potential for regional collaboration.</td>
<td>FRCOG, with RCAT and participating municipalities</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>EDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5-A</td>
<td>Buckland and Shelburne</td>
<td>Bridge of Flowers and Water Infrastructure Project - Structural improvements to bridge and public water infrastructure</td>
<td>Shelburne Falls Fire District</td>
<td>Pre-planning</td>
<td>EDA, MassWorks, MVP, USDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5-A</td>
<td>Colrain</td>
<td>Colrain Town/Village Center Sanitary Sewer System - Extend wastewater system into unserved village center.</td>
<td>Town of Colrain</td>
<td>Pre-development</td>
<td>EDA, USDA, MassWorks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5-A</td>
<td>Conway</td>
<td>Village Center Community Wastewater Disposal System - Create a wastewater system for the village center.</td>
<td>Town of Conway Wastewater Committee</td>
<td>Development/Implementation</td>
<td>EDA, USDA, MassWorks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5-A</td>
<td>Erving</td>
<td>Erving Center Public Water Supply - Create a public water system for the village center.</td>
<td>Town of Erving</td>
<td>Pre-development</td>
<td>EDA, USDA, MassWorks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5-A</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>Greenfield Anaerobic Digester – Construct a state-of-the-art anaerobic digester to handle sludge disposal needs of Treatment Plant, which will contain and control costs of wastewater disposal for businesses and residents. Presently, sludge removal and shipping to a facility in the eastern part of the state is 20% of the operational budget. Once in operation, additional towns in the region may be able to use the facility.</td>
<td>City of Greenfield</td>
<td>Development/Implementation</td>
<td>City, Mass. State Revolving Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5-A, 5-B, 5-C, 5-E</td>
<td>Montague</td>
<td>Canal District Master Plan and Investment Strategy - Complete a Master Plan to prioritize capital investments to support redevelopment of historic mill sites in downtown for commercial, industrial and mixed use.</td>
<td>Town of Montague</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>EDA, MassWorks, Mass-Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5-A</td>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>South Main Street Infrastructure Project - Extend public water system to support existing businesses and expand business development along the commercial corridor in the downtown.</td>
<td>Town of Orange</td>
<td>Pre-development</td>
<td>EDA, USDA, MassWorks</td>
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<td>Goal:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 5-B</td>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td><strong>FRCOG Brownfields Program</strong> - Administer a brownfields program to conduct assessments and support the remediation and redevelopment of sites.</td>
<td>FRCOG, and Brownfields Program Steering Committee</td>
<td>Development/Implementation</td>
<td>EPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5-B</td>
<td>Buckland</td>
<td><strong>50 Conway Street</strong> - Phase II assessment, remediation and rehabilitation of a brownfields site owned by the town for future reuse.</td>
<td>Town of Buckland, and FRCOG</td>
<td>Pre-development</td>
<td>FRCOG Brownfields Program, EPA, Mass-Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5-B</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td><strong>First National Bank Building</strong> - Redevelopment of a vacant, historic downtown structure for commercial use.</td>
<td>Greenfield Redevelopment Authority</td>
<td>Development/Implementation</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5-B</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td><strong>Greenfield Armory</strong> - Redevelopment of a state-owned, soon-to-be vacant, historic downtown structure for residential or mixed use.</td>
<td>City of Greenfield</td>
<td>Pre-planning</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5-B</td>
<td>Orange</td>
<td><strong>Butterfield School Adaptive Reuse</strong> - A redevelopment plan for a vacant, town-owned school building located in the downtown.</td>
<td>Town of Orange</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5-C</td>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td><strong>Commercial/Industrial Site Promotion</strong> - Track sites and support the development or redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties, including sites under municipal ownership and in Opportunity Zones.</td>
<td>FRCOG</td>
<td>Development/Implementation</td>
<td>EDA, FRCOG assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5-C</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td><strong>I-91 Industrial Park Expansion</strong> - Infrastructure extension to make site available for industrial development.</td>
<td>Greenfield Redevelopment Authority</td>
<td>Pre-development</td>
<td>EDA, MassWorks, Mass-Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5-C</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td><strong>180 Laurel Street Redevelopment</strong> - Infrastructure retrofit of city-owned brownfield site to make available for commercial/industrial development.</td>
<td>City of Greenfield</td>
<td>Development/Implementation</td>
<td>EDA, MassWorks, Mass-Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 5-C</td>
<td>Erving</td>
<td><strong>Erving IP Mill Redevelopment</strong> - Remediation, selective demolition, and infrastructure retrofit of town-owned brownfield site to make available for commercial/industrial development.</td>
<td>Town of Erving</td>
<td>Development/Implementation</td>
<td>EDA, MassWorks, Mass-Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5-C</td>
<td>Montague</td>
<td><strong>Sandy Lane Industrial Area</strong> - Extend infrastructure to town-owned parcels to create a new industrial park.</td>
<td>Town of Montague</td>
<td>Development/Implementation</td>
<td>EDA, MassWorks, Mass-Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5-C</td>
<td>Northfield</td>
<td><strong>Northfield Business/Light Industrial Park</strong> - Conduct a feasibility study to determine the market and location for the park, and proceed with its development.</td>
<td>Town of Northfield, Business Park Committee</td>
<td>Pre-planning</td>
<td>EDA, MassWorks, Mass-Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5-D</td>
<td>Western Mass</td>
<td><strong>Last Mile Broadband in Unserved Areas</strong> - Advocate for the elimination or reduction of municipal capital cost burden in unserved communities, in light of anticipated municipal revenue declines due to pandemic impacts. Advocate for resources to reduce operational costs for municipal broadband networks.</td>
<td>FRCOG, FREDI, RPAC</td>
<td>Development/Implementation</td>
<td>USDA, EOHED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5-E</td>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td><strong>Transportation Planning</strong> - Staff to conduct transportation planning program to forward investments in roads, bridges, transit, passenger rail, Complete Streets, culvert assessments, and recreational trails.</td>
<td>FRCOG, and participating municipalities</td>
<td>Planning to Development/Implementation</td>
<td>MassDOT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5-E</td>
<td>Western Mass</td>
<td><strong>Establish Valley Flyer</strong> - Market the pilot passenger rail service to increase ridership and establish the service permanently by funding operations and the acquisition of train sets.</td>
<td>FRCOG, and MassDOT and regional partners</td>
<td>Development/Implementation</td>
<td>MassDOT, MOTT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5-E</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td><strong>East-West Passenger Rail Service</strong> - Advocate for planning and implementation of rail service between Boston and Pittsfield, and between Boston and Greenfield.</td>
<td>FRCOG, MassDOT and statewide partners</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>MassDOT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5-E, Goal 6-B</td>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td><strong>Innovative Public Transit Services</strong> - Invest in regional on-demand micro-transit services beyond the current pilot period.</td>
<td>FRTA, and FRCOG</td>
<td>Development/Implementation</td>
<td>MassDOT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal:</td>
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<td>Lead, and Partners:</td>
<td>Phase:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 6-A, Goal 6-B</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td><strong>Cradle to Career Center</strong> - Create a combined Financial Opportunity Center, Head Start Center/GCC early education practicum site, and full-service Career Center on the GCC campus.</td>
<td>GCC, and CAPV, MHFHCC, MHFHWB</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>EDA, To be determined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 6-A, Goal 7-D</td>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td><strong>Workforce Training for Unemployed Workers</strong> - Development and implement new training programs for workers in COVID-19 impacted industries, including agricultural, food service, retail trade, health care and social assistance, and others; and continue with advanced manufacturing training program to meet needs of employers.</td>
<td>MHFHWB, and MHFHCC, GCC, FCTS</td>
<td>Development/Implementation</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 6-C</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td><strong>Human/Social Service Center</strong> - Create a collaborative center to house multiple service providers in one location.</td>
<td>CAPV</td>
<td>Pre-planning</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 6-C</td>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td><strong>Regional Housing Coordinator Position</strong> - Provide staff capacity to work with municipalities and non-profit entities to encourage housing development.</td>
<td>FCRHRA, and FRCOG, RDI, participating municipalities</td>
<td>Development/Implementation</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 6-C</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td><strong>Development of Greenfield Downtown Housing</strong> - Conduct a planning study to support the creation of more residential units in downtown to increase economic activity and the vibrance of downtown.</td>
<td>City of Greenfield</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>CDBG, MDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 6-C</td>
<td>Montague</td>
<td><strong>Support for Farren Care Center and Facility Investment</strong> - Encourage support for facility investment for a private healthcare center predominantly serving disadvantaged populations.</td>
<td>Town of Montague</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 6-D</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td><strong>GCC Institute for Worker Cooperatives</strong> - Create a new certificate program and start-up grant fund to grow worker-owned cooperatives.</td>
<td>GCC</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>EDA, To be determined</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Goal 7-A, Goal 7-B
Location: Franklin County
Project: Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan - Examine recent experiences, identify gaps and areas to improve, and develop strategies to address current and future needs. Areas to explore include: improving communication with workers and the business community, addressing vulnerable employees and populations, enhancing coordination among regional organizations, and streamlining the development and delivery of resources. Develop the resiliency framework to be adaptable to various types of economic shocks.
Lead, and Partners: FRCOG, and FREDI partners
Phase: Planning
Potential Funding: EDA

Goal 7-C
Location: Franklin County
Project: Economic Development and Resiliency Alignment - Research and collaborate with municipal, regional and statewide leaders and private sector stakeholders to develop economic resiliency best practices to incorporate into economic development, hazard mitigation and sustainability planning efforts at the local and regional level.
Lead, and Partners: FRCOG, and participating municipalities
Phase: Planning
Potential Funding: EDA, MEMA, MVP


Chapter 7: Evaluation Framework

As a designated Economic Development District (EDD), the Franklin Regional Council of Governments reports on performance measures to the EDA on an annual basis. These measures are used to evaluate the development, progress and implementation of the CEDS planning program. These measures reflect the EDA’s mission to create and retain jobs and to stimulate private investment and economic growth, particularly in areas of economic distress. The performance measures applicable to the CEDS planning program are specified in the EDA’s Planning Partnership award with the FRCOG. As a result, the measures stated below may be amended, as appropriate, to the contract between the EDA and the FRCOG. The following measurements will be documented in subsequent CEDS Annual Reports.

Measurement #1 - Number of Projects
The number of projects and activities in the Action Plan that were implemented or developed in the program year.

Measurement #2 - Number of Jobs Created and Retained
The number of jobs created and/or retained by these Action Plan projects and activities.

Measurement #3 – Type and Amount of Investment
The types of Action Plan projects and the estimated amount of public and private investment

A table of the above measurements will be provided with the project title, number of jobs retained or created, the project type, and the estimated amount of public and private investment.

Measurement #4 – Changes in Economic Environment in the Region
Changes in Franklin County’s general economic environment will be documented annually, including the number of employer establishments, number of filled jobs, and the average wage per job from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages dataset. A table of these data points will be updated annually.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Annual Number of Employer Establishments</th>
<th>Annual Number of Filled Jobs</th>
<th>Annual Average Wages (in current dollars)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>2,510</td>
<td>26,852</td>
<td>$42,487 (in 2018 dollars)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A – Town Level Data

Appendix Table 1: Total Population
Appendix Table 2: Population Age Cohorts
Appendix Table 3: Race and Hispanic and Latino Ethnicity
Appendix Table 4: Educational Attainment
Appendix Table 5: Selected Housing Data
Appendix Table 6: Income
Appendix Table 7: Labor Force and Unemployment
## Appendix Table 1: Total Population

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census and Estimates Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>-0.7%</td>
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<td>-1.4%</td>
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<td>-1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1,813</td>
<td>1,671</td>
<td>1,677</td>
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<td>0.4%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1,809</td>
<td>1,897</td>
<td>1,892</td>
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<td>-0.3%</td>
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<td>-1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>1,500</td>
<td>1,489</td>
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<td>0.0%</td>
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<td>337</td>
<td>336</td>
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<td>-0.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heath</td>
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<td>702</td>
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<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leyden</td>
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<td>711</td>
<td>724</td>
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<td>1.8%</td>
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<td>93</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>112</td>
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<td>-8.0%</td>
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<td>-2.3%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>393</td>
<td>394</td>
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<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1,893</td>
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<td>1,771</td>
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<td>0.2%</td>
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<td>-0.7%</td>
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<td>750</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>780</td>
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<td>0.0%</td>
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<td>986</td>
<td>848</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1,580</td>
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<td>5.3%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>71,372</td>
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<td>-0.6%</td>
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<td>6,349,113</td>
<td>6,547,629</td>
<td>6,902,149</td>
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<td>5.1%</td>
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<td>308,745,538</td>
<td>327,167,434</td>
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<td>5.6%</td>
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### Appendix Table 2: Population Age Cohorts

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census and Estimates Programs; MassDOT and UMass Donahue Institute, Population Projections, 2018.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Geography</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Under 18 Years Old</th>
<th>18 to 44 Years Old</th>
<th>44 to 64 Years Old</th>
<th>65 Years Old Or Over</th>
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<td>369</td>
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<td>700</td>
<td>467</td>
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<td>329</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>403</td>
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<td>1,649</td>
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<td>375</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>338</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gill</td>
<td>1,608</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>286</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3,172</td>
<td>6,008</td>
<td>4,740</td>
<td>3,548</td>
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<td>120</td>
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<td>Heath</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>166</td>
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<td>Leverett</td>
<td>1,983</td>
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<td>592</td>
<td>506</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leyden</td>
<td>692</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>124</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monroe</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>1,453</td>
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<td>2,616</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rowe</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>126</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shelburne</td>
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<td>638</td>
<td>538</td>
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<tr>
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<td>638</td>
<td>327</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunderland</td>
<td>3,659</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>1,825</td>
<td>858</td>
<td>441</td>
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<tr>
<td>Warwick</td>
<td>781</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendell</td>
<td>853</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1,433</td>
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<td>463</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>293</td>
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<tr>
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<td>12,560</td>
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<td>14,365</td>
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<td>1,078,224</td>
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<td>73,553,240</td>
<td>116,234,905</td>
<td>83,876,304</td>
<td>49,238,581</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geography</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Under 18 Years Old</th>
<th>18 to 44 Years Old</th>
<th>44 to 64 Years Old</th>
<th>65 Years Old Or Over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berkshire, MA</td>
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<td>22,133</td>
<td>38,763</td>
<td>38,368</td>
<td>28,064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin, MA</td>
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<td>12,560</td>
<td>22,013</td>
<td>21,997</td>
<td>14,365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampden, MA</td>
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<td>102,903</td>
<td>164,674</td>
<td>126,310</td>
<td>75,229</td>
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<td>24,335</td>
<td>70,408</td>
<td>40,706</td>
<td>25,710</td>
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<td>176,734</td>
<td>285,867</td>
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</tr>
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<td>22,020</td>
<td>14,195</td>
</tr>
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<td>10,209</td>
<td>10,885</td>
<td>7,906</td>
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<td>13,478</td>
<td>9,065</td>
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<td>8-County Region</td>
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<td>367,336</td>
<td>630,838</td>
<td>511,041</td>
<td>296,936</td>
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</table>
## Appendix Table 3: Race and Hispanic and Latino Ethnicity

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 ACS Five-Year Estimates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black or African American</th>
<th>American Indian &amp; Alaska Native</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Native Hawaiian &amp; Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Some Other Race</th>
<th>Two or More Races</th>
<th>Hispanic or Latino (of any race)</th>
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<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>75</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>161</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>439</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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### Appendix Table 4: Educational Attainment

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 ACS Five-Year Estimates.

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<th>High School Graduate</th>
<th>Some College or Associate's Degree</th>
<th>Bachelor's Degree</th>
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Appendix Table 5: Housing Units and Occupancy
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 ACS Five-Year Estimates.

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<th>Total Housing Units</th>
<th>Total Occupied Housing Units (or Households)</th>
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<th>Renter-occupied Units</th>
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### Appendix Table 6: Income and Poverty Rate

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 ACS Five-Year Estimates.

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<th>Median Household Income</th>
<th>Total Families</th>
<th>Median Family Income</th>
<th>Poverty Rate (for whom poverty was determined)</th>
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<td>5.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wendell</td>
<td>853</td>
<td>32,597</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>44,531</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>63,750</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whately</td>
<td>1,433</td>
<td>52,459</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>72,542</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>83,155</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td>70,935</td>
<td>34,202</td>
<td>30,328</td>
<td>59,522</td>
<td>18,003</td>
<td>78,263</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>6,830,193</td>
<td>41,794</td>
<td>2,601,914</td>
<td>77,378</td>
<td>1,651,808</td>
<td>98,625</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>322,903,030</td>
<td>32,621</td>
<td>119,730,128</td>
<td>60,293</td>
<td>78,697,103</td>
<td>73,965</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix Table 7: Labor Force and Unemployment

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; MA Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geography</th>
<th>2019 Labor Force</th>
<th>2019 Number of Employed</th>
<th>2019 Number of Unemployed</th>
<th>2019 Unemployment Rate</th>
<th>2018 Unemployment Rate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashfield</td>
<td>1,212</td>
<td>1,185</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernardston</td>
<td>1,281</td>
<td>1,234</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buckland</td>
<td>1,008</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlemont</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colrain</td>
<td>1,039</td>
<td>1,006</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conway</td>
<td>1,266</td>
<td>1,238</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deerfield</td>
<td>3,181</td>
<td>3,113</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erving</td>
<td>1,013</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gill</td>
<td>994</td>
<td>971</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>9,994</td>
<td>9,720</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hawley</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heath</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leverett</td>
<td>1,168</td>
<td>1,143</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leyden</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monroe</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montague</td>
<td>4,441</td>
<td>4,305</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Salem</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northfield</td>
<td>1,847</td>
<td>1,802</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>3,640</td>
<td>3,514</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowe</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelburne</td>
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<td>1,179</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shutesbury</td>
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<td>1,130</td>
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<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunderland</td>
<td>2,645</td>
<td>2,588</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warwick</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendell</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whately</td>
<td>1,088</td>
<td>1,070</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td>41,318</td>
<td>40,207</td>
<td>1,111</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
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<td>3,706,556</td>
<td>110,881</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>163,539</td>
<td>157,538</td>
<td>6,001</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B – CEDS Project Proposal Form

2020 Franklin County CEDS Plan
Economic Development Project Proposal Form

Do you anticipate pursuing an economic development project within the next five years? Let us know about it by completing a project proposal form.

A new 2020 Franklin County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Plan is in development by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG), under the guidance of the CEDS Committee. Using a framework from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), this CEDS Plan will serve as a roadmap for the FRCOG and its partners to foster an environment in Franklin County that cultivates business and job growth and enhances economic opportunity for all.

As part of the 2020 CEDS Plan, selected local and regional economic development projects seeking public investment will be highlighted. For projects potentially applying for EDA investment, inclusion in the 2020 CEDS Plan is required. (Note: FRCOG staff can assist in determining if a project is eligible to apply to EDA.) For projects not eligible or not intending to apply to EDA, it may be advantageous to be included in the 2020 CEDS Plan as it can demonstrate regional support for a project and/or may help identify potential funding sources.

The minimum criteria for a project to be considered are:
- Project is anticipated to be initiated by 2025.
- Project will result in the creation or retention of jobs in Franklin County.
- Project will spur business growth or increase private investment in Franklin County.
- Project will contribute to Franklin County’s overall economic competitiveness and/or resiliency.
- Project will be implemented by a municipality or public entity or a non-profit organization.
- Project will require some form of public investment to be feasible.
- Project will benefit more than a single individual or business.
- If the project is seeking public funding for construction, the project will be on property owned by a unit of government or a non-profit entity.
- While licensed cannabis operations are legal in Massachusetts, the creation of the CEDS Plan is through a federal program. As such, projects solely to benefit cannabis operations are not eligible for consideration.

Examples of projects may include, but are not limited to:
- Critical infrastructure improvements that will result in greater economic activity.
- A regional initiative or feasibility study to enhance a key industry sector.
- Development of new planned industrial park land.
- Creation of a business incubator or maker-space.
- Targeted workforce training or skills program.
- Entrepreneurship or business development program.
- Zoning, permitting or other regulatory technical assistance.

Please complete online form at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FC_CEDS_Proposal by no later than Friday, March 6, 2020 at 5:00 pm to tell us about your project proposal for possible inclusion in the 2020 CEDS Plan. Please note that this is not an application for grant funding. There is no guarantee that by completing this form, the project will be included in the 2020 CEDS Plan or will receive grant funding if included in the 2020 CEDS Plan. If there are any questions, please contact Jessica Atwood, FRCOG Economic Development Program Manager at jatwood@frcog.org or 413-774-3167 x123.
The project profile form must be completed using the online Survey Monkey platform at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FC_CEDS_Proposal. For reference, the questions from this form are below.

1. Project Title:

2. Project Area/Location:

3. Brief Project Description:

4. Lead Organization for Project:

5. Brief description of Lead Organization (i.e. unit of government or type of non-profit organization, capacity to implement, experience with similar projects, etc.)

6. Project Partners, if any (name, organization):

7. Primary Contact Person for Project (name, title, organization, email, phone):

8. Describe how this project will result in creating new employment opportunities, promote investment and business growth, and/or make Franklin County more economically resilient and competitive.

9. Will a particular industry or economic cluster be strengthened through this project? If so, what industry or cluster? (select one)
   a. Not applicable
   b. No specific industry or cluster
   c. Unknown at this time
   d. Yes (please specify)

10. Is the project site-specific? (select one)
    a. Not applicable
    b. Yes, but the site is unknown at this time
    c. Yes, a site has been identified.

11. If the project is site-specific, is the site identified? And if so, who owns the property currently and is ownership anticipated to change over the course of project implementation?

12. Will the project propose to redevelop or reuse a current or past "brownfield" site? Note: A brownfield is a property for which the redevelopment or reuse of it may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant. (select one)
    a. Not applicable
    b. No
    c. Unknown at this time
    d. Yes (please describe)

13. Will the project increase economic activity in a downtown or village center? (select one)
    a. Not applicable
    b. No
    c. Unknown at this time
    d. Yes (please describe)

14. Will the project leverage information technology or broadband infrastructure? (select one)
    a. Not applicable
    b. No
    c. Unknown at this time
    d. Yes (please describe)

15. Has the project been included in a Master Plan, Community Development Strategy, Strategic Plan, or similar document produced by a municipality or other public entity or a non-profit organization? Please describe.
16. Please select the response(s) that best describe community support for the project. (check all that apply)
   a. Project discussed at a public meeting and support expressed.
   b. Project has the expressed support of the Select Board or Mayor for where the project will be located.
   c. Project partners have stated their commitment to support implementation.
   d. Some funding or in-kind support has been committed to the project.
   e. Other, please specify.

17. Select the response that best describes the next phase of the project. (It is understood that the total project being proposed may include multiple phases. For example, a project may be seeking support for both design & engineering and for construction. In this example, the next phase is Pre-development.) (select one)
   a. Pre-planning Phase – support needed for initial planning and proposal development
   b. Planning Phase – support needed for planning or feasibility study, market analysis, business plan, conceptual designs, etc.
   c. Pre-development for Construction project - support needed for design, engineering, permitting, etc.
   d. Development Phase – support needed to fund construction or implementation
   e. Other (please specify)

18. Estimated project costs and funding for next phase of project.
   a. Estimated project cost:
   b. Amount of funding secured:
   c. Amount of public investment sought:

19. Please describe the current or anticipated source(s) of funding and/or in-kind support for the project.

20. Are there any additional statements about the project?

21. Project profile submitted by, if different from the Primary Contact Person identified in Question #6.
   (name, title, organization, email, phone)

Thank you for submitting a project proposal.

Information about the status of projects submitted for inclusion in the draft 2020 CEDS Plan will be available in late April/early May 2020. If there are any questions, please contact Jessica Atwood at 413-774-3167 x123 or jatwood@frcog.org.
Two proposals submitted for consideration were not included in the 2020 CEDS Plan Action Plan. While the proposals are valuable community projects, they did not meet the criteria for inclusion. They are as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location:</th>
<th>Project:</th>
<th>Lead, and Partners:</th>
<th>Phase:</th>
<th>Potential Funding:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Salem</td>
<td>New Salem Town Hall and Auditorium Project - Restoration and rehabilitation of vacant, historic, town-owned structure to become the new Town Hall and public meeting auditorium.</td>
<td>New Salem Historical Commission</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Salem</td>
<td>New Salem Police Station Project - Rehabilitate current town office building to become the police station.</td>
<td>New Salem Historical Commission and Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D – Legal Advertisement Announcing Public Comment Period

Appendix E – CEDS Committee and EDD Governing Board Meetings

During the CEDS planning program year, the following meetings were held.

CEDS Committee Meetings:
November 19, 2019
February 11, 2020
April 9, 2020
May 4, 2020
June 8, 2020 (Committed voted to approve the final 2020 CEDS Plan)

Economic Development District (EDD) Governing Board Meetings:
August 19, 2019
May 14, 2020
June 11, 2020 (Board voted to adopt the final 2020 CEDS Plan)
July 16, 2020

Franklin Regional Planning Board:
June 25, 2020* (Board voted to endorse the final 2020 CEDS Plan)

* Meeting minutes are available upon request.
**CEDS Committee Members:**
- MJ Adams, City of Greenfield
- Teri Anderson, MassHire Franklin Hampshire Career Center
- Marie Breheny, Greenfield Community College
- AJ Bresciano, Greenfield Savings Bank
- Patricia Crosby, Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board
- Jenna Day, RCAP Solutions
- Gary Dillensneider, Franklin County Community Development Corporation
- Gina Govoni, Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority/Rural Development, Inc.
- Tom Hutcheson, Franklin Regional Planning Board
- Clare Higgins, Community Action Pioneer Valley
- Walter Ramsey, Town of Montague
- John Waite, Franklin County Community Development Corporation

**Guests:**
- Dawn Creighton, Greenfield Community College
- Martha Field, Greenfield Community College

**FRCOG Staff:**
- Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director
- Peggy Sloan, Director of Planning and Development
- Jessica Atwood, Economic Development Program Manager
- Alyssa Larose, Senior Land Use & Natural Resource Planner

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1 – Call the meeting to order, and round of introductions: Linda Dunlavy, FRCOG

The meeting was called to order at 3:33 p.m. by L. Dunlavy. A round of introductions followed.

2 – Elect Chair and Vice-Chair: Linda Dunlavy, FRCOG

L. Dunlavy stated that Gary Dillensneider volunteered to serve as Chair of the reformulated CEDS Committee. He was the Chair of the previous CEDS Committee, and only missed one meeting in 20
years. Patricia Crosby has volunteered to serve as Vice Chair, and was an active member of the previous CEDS Committee.

At 3:37 p.m. MJ Adams MOVED to elect G. Dillensneider as Chair, and P. Crosby as Vice Chair, of the CEDS Committee. T. Hutcheson SECONDED. The motion PASSED unanimously.

### 3 – Vote to Approve Minutes from June 12, 2019: Gary Dillensneider, Chair

J. Atwood noted that even though the CEDS Committee has been restructured since the June 12, 2019 meeting, the Committee still needs to acknowledge those minutes. G. Dillensneider asked for a motion to approve the minutes from June 12, 2019. MJ Adams MOVED to approve the June 12, 2019 minutes. T. Hutcheson SECONDED. The motion PASSED unanimously, with T. Anderson abstaining.

### 4 – Review and Discussion of the CEDS Planning Framework: Jessica Atwood, FRCOG

J. Atwood provided an overview of economic development. The purpose is to enhance the overall environment that supports economic prosperity, and encompasses many areas of expertise and experience, including workforce development, business development, infrastructure, governments, and real estate. The CEDS planning framework was created by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), a division of the Department of Commerce. It requires a 5-year plan for the region that outlines goals and strategies. It serves as a mechanism for bringing partners together and leveraging or building on the strengths of our region. By participating in the CEDS framework, our region maintains its eligibility to apply for EDA construction or non-construction grants.

Atwood explained the role of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG). The FRCOG Planning Department implements region-wide initiatives and provides municipal technical assistance in a variety of topics, and serves as the coordinator of the CEDS program. In 2006, FRCOG was designated by the EDA as an Economic Development District (EDD), allowing FRCOG to apply for planning grant funds for staff time and to make the region eligible for other EDA grants. The EDD Governing Board is made up of the FRCOG Executive Committee. The Franklin Regional Planning Board, with members from each of the 26 towns, also serves an advisory role to the Planning Department and is part of the CEDS process. FRCOG has a scope of work from EDA that directs the CEDS activities; creating the CEDS plan is one of the activities.

FRCOG has led the CEDS planning process since 1995. In 2019, the CEDS Region was restructured. The region previously included Amherst, Athol, and Philipston, but these towns are included in other CEDS regions. The FRCOG CEDS region is now only comprised of Franklin County towns. Atwood noted that staff will continue to work with neighboring regions on initiatives. The CEDS Committee was also restructured in 2019 to better highlight economic development partners. The new composition includes geographic representatives from Greenfield, Central, East, and West County; regional organizations that focus on workforce development or education, entrepreneurship or business development, business groups or chambers of commerce, social and human service organizations, and/or government service; a representative from the FRPB; and At-Large representatives. In total the Committee has 19 members. Additional people can be added to the email list if interested, and all meetings are posted to the FRCOG website in advance.
Atwood provided an overview of the CEDS Plan. The Plan identifies regional economic development goals and the strategies to accomplish them. It is a five-year plan with annual reports. The next plan will be submitted in June 2020. The plan serves as a roadmap for FRCOG and partners to work together, and maintains the region’s eligibility for certain EDA funding. A project/entity wanting to apply for EDA funds in the next five years needs to be listed in the CEDS Plan. Required elements of the plan include a summary background of the region, a Strength-Weakness-Opportunity-Threats (SWOT) Analysis, strategies including economic resilience, and how progress will be evaluated using performance measures, which are reported on each year.

Atwood presented an overview of the current economic environment in Franklin County. She noted that new U.S. Census data will not be released for a few more weeks. At the next meeting, she will have more information to share. Although the CEDS plan will be shorter, the appendix will include data that is helpful for grant applications. Atwood explained that population projections for the county completed by UMass and MassDOT show a slight uptick in the next ten years, then a decline in population for the next 20 years. All areas of MA are expected to increase in population over the same timeframe, except for Franklin County, Berkshire County, and the Cape. The projections do not assume impacts from sea level rise. Franklin County’s population skews older than the State and is less diverse. When looking at neighboring counties in New Hampshire and Vermont, they are seeing similar trends in population.

Atwood explained that the labor force and number of employed has increased since the end of the recession. Residents are more likely to be employed in not-for-profit, self-employed, or government sectors than private for-profit employers. The size of private businesses is also small in the region. A large employer for Franklin County has 50 employees. A Committee member commented that it would be helpful to see pre-recession figures to see how the economy changed. A question was asked about what caused the dramatic increase in labor force between 2017 and 2018. Atwood said the trend is similar in other parts of the State but was unsure.

Income levels in Franklin County are significantly lower than the State, but comparable to national figures. This does not take into account the cost of living. Average earning per job in Franklin County has been the lowest in the State since 2000. Franklin County is not isolated, with 23% of workers come into the county for jobs; 31% live and work in the county; and 46% commute outside of the county for work. This is similar to other counties. There is also workforce flow between states.

The CEDS Plan uses industry clusters to identify competitive advantages, Defining clusters is not easy, and traditional definitions don’t always line up with Franklin County. The U.S. Census Bureau’s County Business Patterns gives a picture of key private sector industries, but does not include the public sector and self-employment. The region has seen recent increases in manufacturing and education services. Manufacturing in Franklin County is double the percent of employees than the state and nation. Non-employer statistics can capture self-employment in the region, though there is not a direct correlation to employment. For agriculture, the USDA Census of Agriculture provides data every five years on farm operations. Between 2012 and 2017, the number of farming operations in the county increased by 6%, compared to a statewide decrease of 7%. Atwood noted that there are clusters not defined by the U.S. Census or USDA that have traditionally been important to Franklin County, including adventure tourism/outdoor recreation, the creative economy, the green/sustainable economy, forest, farm and food systems, and the knowledge creation economy.
Atwood presented a list of potential strategic partners in Franklin County as well as outside of the county. She noted that much of what drives our initiatives is public investment by the state and federal government, making it important to align efforts with state plans. An example is the Rural Policy Plan (RPP). L. Dunlavy provided an overview of the RPP, which was spearheaded by the MA Rural Policy Advisory Commission. The Plan was launched in October and aims to educate lawmakers about rural conditions in the State and what is needed to strengthen the vitality of small towns.

Atwood asked the Committee to begin thinking about a vision for the region in 20 years. She shared what has been the approach to economic development traditionally, and asked for thoughts from the Committee. A comment was made that with a declining, old white population, it makes sense to revisit the approach and ask why aren’t people coming here, and how can we attract a more diverse population. Atwood provided some examples of shared values for working on economic development and asked for comments. A comment was made that the term “community character” jumps out as potentially unwelcoming to newcomers.

A comment was made to add language about supporting a diversity of economic sectors, growing businesses from within, and stronger language to encourage living wage jobs. It was noted that the “nurture greater local control / independence” language can be problematic – local control can keep people out. A regional approach where towns have the tools to create economic resilience and independence was discussed. Another comment was in regards to making sure the State recognizes the challenges of rural areas. There need to be equitable ways to meet the needs of rural communities. A Committee member commented that focusing on self-reliance and import substitution could be a goal. Another comment was to focus on welcoming young people, innovation, and more diversity, which could help draw innovative employers too. Atwood said she would revise the shared values and vision based on Committee comments.

Atwood reviewed the SWOT analysis framework and inputs that go into the CEDS plan. Inputs come from the Committee, strategic partners, neighboring regions and the State, and from a solicitation to identify local projects. The Plan can’t cover everything but should identify what we can work together on. A Committee member asked what research of other rural areas is being done. Atwood answered there are some regions with similar characteristics. In the RPP, examples from Maine and Vermont often came up.

Atwood discussed project solicitation for the CEDS Plan. She explained that any projects seeking EDA funding need to be in the Plan. However, for projects not seeking EDA funding, it is still helpful to be included when pursuing other funding. A few example projects were provided. She noted that EDA funding is very competitive, and only government and non-profit entities are eligible to apply. Some EDA priorities include brownfields redevelopment, infrastructure to support business development, and specifically new job creation.

Atwood noted that the project solicitation will be online, and passed out a draft hardcopy of the form. She would like input from the Committee on the form and who should be forward the information on how to submit projects, and how to get input on the vision, goals, and strategies for the Plan. The challenge for the CEDS Plan is to be comprehensive but also focused on strategies that can be implemented. A community-wide survey was discussed. It was noted that a number of partners are in the process of doing strategic plans and have surveys out already.
5 – Next Steps: Jessica Atwood, FRCOG

Atwood discussed next steps and a proposed meeting schedule with the Committee. She asked if the Committee was agreeable to the schedule of four more meetings through June 2020. The Committee asked to have the meetings scheduled ahead of time. Atwood will send out the slides from the meeting to the Committee, and will ask for feedback on specific items.

6 – Other business not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance, and adjourn.

G. Dillensneider asked if there is any other business. Being none, Dillensneider asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

T. Hutcheson MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 4:48 p.m. P. Crosby SECONDED the motion. The motion PASSED.

Respectfully submitted by:

[Signature]
Gary Dillensneider, Chair
The meeting was called to order at 4:06 p.m. by G. Dillensneider. A round of introductions followed.

At 4:07 p.m. G. Dillensneider asked for a motion to approve the minutes from November 19, 2019. MJ Adams MOVED to approve the November 19, 2019 minutes. P. Crosby SECONDED. The motion PASSED unanimously.

J. Atwood explained that the Background Chapter is a required element of the CEDS Plan. It outlines the existing demographic and economic conditions that support economic development. Atwood sent the draft to the Committee prior to the meeting. She noted that in the past this chapter was lengthy; this draft will be more streamlined. Town level data will now be in an appendix. The chapter includes some new data sources, such as the inflow and outflow of jobs in the county, and focuses on Franklin County, and how the region compares to the state, nation, and surrounding counties.
Atwood noted that labor force and employment levels in the County have surpassed pre-recession levels. Unemployment levels in Franklin County are typically lower than the state and nation, but follow similar trends. A Committee member asked why the labor force is growing when the population in the County is not. It was noted that it could be due to people re-entering the workforce because there are jobs available, or people who are delaying retirement.

Atwood explained that Franklin County has more self-employment, government, and non-profit jobs that other areas, and less private and for-profit jobs. As government funding changes, it can impact the County’s workforce to a greater degree than other areas. She noted that according to Census estimates, incomes in Franklin County are lower than the state, but comparable to the nation. Federal funding sources compare incomes to national averages, but in the context of Massachusetts, Franklin County is economically distressed. Atwood presented living wage data for western Massachusetts. Discussion followed about living wages and whether public assistance is included. A Committee member noted that a local group has been working on collecting data related to the “cliff effect,” where a household income rises beyond eligibility for public assistance, but is not high enough to qualify as a living wage.

Atwood presented average earnings per job for Franklin County, which have consistently been the lowest among all counties in the state. A discussion followed about whether to include data on average wages per job, or if it would be duplicative. Atwood reviewed data on the number of jobs and businesses in the County, not including self-employment. She said while the number of businesses has increased, the number of jobs is still below pre-recession levels, though is growing. New businesses tend to be small. She noted that wages in Franklin County adjusted for inflation have not increased since the recession.

Atwood presented top industry sectors in the county, not including self-employed. Health care and social assistance is the top sector. Manufacturing is second, with a higher concentration of jobs in Franklin County than the state or nation. A discussion followed about what sub-sectors may be included in the miscellaneous manufacturing category, such as candle manufacturing and precision manufacturing. Atwood noted she will look into the miscellaneous category further, and can add trend data to the sectors to show growth or decline. It was also noted that Franklin County shares many traits with the counties to the north, and those connections should be highlighted. Atwood explained that retail trade, accommodations, and food services is the third largest sector, but also has some of the lowest wages. Educational services is not as large of a sector in Franklin County as it is in the greater 8-county region, where it accounts for a large number of jobs. Many people in Franklin County work for higher education institutions located in nearby counties. The Pioneer Valley Labor Blue Print identifies special needs educators and support positions at the K-12 level as gaps in the industry.

Atwood noted that the data does not show arts, entertainment, and recreation as a large employment sector in the county, but this dataset does not include self-employed individuals. This sector is part of the creative economy and tourism clusters, and helps to attract visitors and new residents to the region. It was noted that having a call-out box in the chapter with trends in different sectors, such as the creative economy, would be helpful. It was noted that seasonal employment might not be reflected in the data.

Atwood presented agricultural trends from the 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture. Since the 2012 Census, Franklin County experienced a 12% increase in farms and an 11% increase in the amount of land in farms. Franklin County had $4.9 million in market value from value-added products, making
up a significant portion of the statewide number. It was noted that the next Census of Agriculture will include data on hemp production. Marijuana growing is not included in the Census.

Atwood then presented information on major employers. Eighty-seven percent of private businesses in Franklin County have less than 20 employees, consistent with the state and nation. Emerging and priority clusters are to be identified in the new CEDS Plan using data and local knowledge. A 2016 cluster mapping tool showed unique concentrations of jobs in metal working, plastics, communications, apparel, marketing, and recreational goods. The data is useful but should not be solely relied upon. Atwood presented the clusters from the last plan and asked what should be the focus for the next five years. There was discussion about the renewable energy and green construction cluster and tourism cluster. It was discussed that the reliance on government and non-profit sectors could be highlighted in some way. It may not be a cluster as it includes a broad range of jobs. Technology was identified as a cross-cutting occupation, but not an individual sector. Atwood will add cross-cutting themes, assets, and infrastructure, such as the broadband and technology, that impact all clusters.

Atwood showed a new chart added about solar PV generation in Franklin County. Many towns in the county are participating in the state’s Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program and Green Communities program. Towns are assessing vulnerabilities and concerns related to climate change. It was noted that the expense to maintain and repair water and wastewater systems should be added to that section. Under workforce development, Atwood noted the county has traditional and non-traditional lending, collaborative workspaces, incentive programs such as new market tax credits and opportunity zones. This section will be streamlined. In addition, FRCOG created a business development resource guide that includes information for entrepreneurs looking to start or expand a business.

Atwood noted that the summary chapter is still a draft, but she wanted to present the draft as a basis for working on the SWOT analysis.

4 – 2020 CEDS Plan Vision and Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT)
Activities: Jessica Atwood, FRCOG

Atwood lead the Committee in a brainstorming exercise to identify the region’s Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. It was noted that the exercise was a good start and that past SWOT analyses should be referenced and compared.

Atwood then asked the Committee to revisit the vision statement. She asked if the statement should be short or more robust. Discussion followed. A draft vision statement was developed: To leverage the county’s intrinsic and emerging assets to collaboratively create economic opportunity in a manner that is sustainable, equitable, and inclusive. Atwood will work to refine the language, and may include a bulleted list of succinct statements or values.

5 – Other business not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance, and adjourn.

Atwood stated that the CEDS project solicitation is out and should be submitted by March 6, 2020.
G. Dillensneider asked if there is any other business. Being none, Dillensneider asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MJ Adams MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 5:49 p.m. G. Govoni SECONDED the motion. The motion PASSED.

Respectfully submitted by:

Gary Dillensneider, Chair
1 – Call the meeting to order, and round of introductions: Jessica Atwood, FRCOG

At 3:00 p.m., J. Atwood called the meeting to order. The meeting was held via the online Zoom application, due to the COVID-19 state of emergency preventing in-person meetings. Atwood announced the online participants.

2 – Vote to Approve Minutes from February 11, 2020: Jessica Atwood, FRCOG

Approval of the February 11, 2020 minutes was tabled for the next meeting.
J. Atwood reviewed recent activities of FRCOG’s Economic Development Planning Program in response to the COVID-19 state of emergency. Activities included gathering business resources and guidance, and sharing it with regional partners and municipalities and posting it online and via social media. Staff also worked with partners in Franklin County and across the Pioneer Valley to conduct a survey of business and organizations to better understand the economic impact of this crisis.

The Impact of COVID-19: Pioneer Valley Business/Organization Survey was released online on March 24. The same day, Gov. Baker issued an order for all non-essential businesses to cease in-person operations, and the MA DPH issued a stay at home advisory, which are now in effect through May 4. Since then, the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, allocating $2.2 trillion to individuals and businesses impacted by the pandemic and economic downturn, was enacted. The survey ended on March 31, and had 284 respondents from Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden counties. Information gathered in the survey will be used to advocate for resources, she explained.

J. Atwood summarized survey results from Franklin County based businesses and organizations. There were 139 respondents, or 40% of the total respondents, based in Franklin County. Eighty-seven percent of respondents reported a negative impact on business, 68% of those “significantly” or “severely negative.” In response to the question of “at this rate, how long do you estimate your business/organization can operate with your current cash flow and/or reserves?”, 19% responded less than a month; 38% responded 1-3 months; 12% responded 4-12 months; 19% responded 1+ year or indefinitely; and the remaining 11% didn’t know. Respondents reported that they are being impacted in many ways, with declines in sales and clients, and cancelled or postponed events and contracts chief among them. The full results of the survey is available on the FRCOG website.

Local respondents indicated plans to use grant funding (if available), unemployment insurance, potential offers from suppliers/lenders to delay payments, and new or re-financed business loans, among other possible resources. Open-ended survey questions showed interest in financial support for payroll and the implementation of safety equipment and protocols; expanded unemployment benefits and support for laid-off workers; deferment or relief of mortgage or rent payments; business technical assistance; additional staff or volunteers; IT or broadband support, including internet access at employees’ homes; and the deferment or reduction of tax payments. Additional responses mentioned the need for help with debt management, transitioning business models, marketing, post-crisis scaling-up of operations, restoring community confidence, re-engaging advertisers, and accessing alternate suppliers.

J. Atwood said that the federal CARES Act will distribute supplemental funding to federal agencies, including the Economic Development Administration, the Department of Agriculture’s Rural Development program, the Small Business Administration, the Department of Labor, and the Housing and Urban Development’s Community Development Block Grant program. She noted that funding for the latter will come through the state, and that in Franklin County, the City of Greenfield is the only mini-entitlement community that does not need to apply, and will automatically receive grant funding. MJ Adams indicated that she, J. Atwood, J. Waite, and W. Ramsey have discussed using past CDBG resources to provide help to small businesses.
T. Anderson announced that the Career Center is operating remotely, and its website includes two new resource pages. She noted that the CARES Act unemployment provisions will not be ready until the end of April, but that payments will be retro-active. The counseling team reports receiving approximately 100 unemployment-related calls per day, and the business team is working with employers who are hiring, she said.

J. Atwood reported that a new Notice of Funding Opportunity for EDA funds is expected to be release in the next 2-3 weeks. Currently the FRCOG’s preliminary requests to the EDA are to:

- Capitalize programs to provide direct investment in private for-profit businesses and non-profit organizations using loan-grant combinations, such as discounted loans or forgivable loans.
- Fund programs to provide business technical assistance, counseling and coaching to private businesses/organizations. Allow these entities to scale up staffing and to procure consultant and service providers to provide targeted assistance to businesses/organizations in need.
- Fund CEDS projects that address barriers to accessing employment and long-term infrastructure needs.
- Adjust match requirements and increase FRCOG’s EDD planning staff award.

J. Waite indicated that the FCCDC has been administering CDBG and EDA revolving loan funds (RLF) for 25 years, and would be happy to administer new EDA funds to capitalize an RLF and for expanded technical assistance. He is hesitant to encourage local businesses to take on additional debt, which may be possible for the few that are well-established. J. Atwood noted that FCCDC’s strong relationships with surrounding CDCs may yield collaboration on EDA funding requests, and that she is advocating for a reduction in the EDA’s requirement for a 50% match with non-federal funds. J. Day suggested further elaboration of technical assistance requests.

L. Dunlavy reported that US Congressmen Richard Neal and Jim McGovern have encouraged her to think about requests for infrastructure, as that there may be opportunity for transformational projects to be undertaken. Water and wastewater infrastructure is badly needed in the region, and may be an appropriate focus, she indicated.

C. Higgins described a pronounced need for larger spaces to accommodate Community Action’s public services for the next 18-20 months, noting that small church basements and the like do not allow for social-distancing when accessing emergency resources.

In summary, J. Atwood stated that requests for COVID-19 emergency resources will be incorporated into the new CEDS Plan. While the plan had been drafted based on the most recent data available, she will incorporate the survey results on the current crisis to provide context.

4 – Review and Discussion of CEDS Plan Project Proposals, and Draft Goals and Objectives: Jessica Atwood, FRCOG

In response to a January invitation sent to the 26 member municipalities and 37 non-profit and government entities, J. Atwood received over 30 project proposals. Projects proposed included infrastructure, development or re-development of a structure, cluster development, programmatic support, and a revolving loan fund. J. Atwood reviewed the projects submitted.
In response to questions, P. Sloan described the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership and the proposed Forest Center. J. Atwood expanded on proposals to foster the Creative Economy, and to conduct a Deerfield River Outdoor Recreation study. D. Syznal explained the reasoning behind the request to do a CiderDays economic impact study. Further discussion identified Erving as a location needing a public water supply study. J. Atwood indicated that additional submissions may be considered. While all submitted project ideas will be included in the appendix, the CEDS Plan will highlight those proposals aligned with the Plan’s vision and goals, have an established implementation team and next steps identified.

J. Atwood requested feedback on the draft of a goals and objectives. Members suggested the inclusion of goals pertaining to employment equity, career advancement, job quality enhancement, improvement of working environments, access to supportive services, a social assistance sector, a food system resiliency plan, transportation infrastructure, access to safe housing, availability of housing for various income levels, equitable wealth creation and financial security.

5 – Other business not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance, and adjourn.

J. Waite announced a FCCDC initiative to develop a grant pool of a few hundred thousand dollars for awarding to struggling small businesses. The fund would be comparable to CISA’s emergency fund for small farms, and the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts’ emergency fund for non-profit organizations. Ideally, flexible private capital will be available before government relief funds arrive, he indicated.

J. Atwood reviewed the schedule for creating the 2020 CEDS Plan, including distributing a preliminary draft plan to the Committee on April 30 and a virtual Committee meeting on May 4 at 1 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Gary Dillensneider, Chair
**Franklin Regional Council of Governments**  
**Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>May 4, 2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time:</td>
<td>1:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td>Virtual Meeting via Zoom due to COVID-19 state of emergency.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duration:</td>
<td>1 hour, 15 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitator:</td>
<td>J. Atwood</td>
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**CEDS Committee Attendees:**
- MJ Adams, City of Greenfield
- Teri Anderson, MassHire Franklin Hampshire Career Center
- Marie Breheny, Greenfield Community College
- Patricia Crosby, MassHire Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board
- Jenna Day, RCAP Solutions
- Gary Dixnensieder, FCCDC Loan Review Committee
- Gina Govoni, Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority
- Tom Hutcheson, Franklin Regional Planning Board
- Walter Ramsey, Town of Montague
- Bryan Smith, Town of Erving
- Diana Szynal, Franklin County Chamber of Commerce
- John Waite, Franklin County Community Development Corporation

**Guests:**
- Judy Raper, Greenfield Community College

**FRCOG Staff:**
- Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director
- Peggy Sloan, Director of Planning and Development
- Jessica Atwood, Economic Development Program Manager
- Liz Jacobson-Carroll, Administrative Services Assistant

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**1 – Call the meeting to order, and roll call for attendance: Jessica Atwood, FRCOG**

At 1:01 p.m., J. Atwood called the meeting to order. The meeting was held via the online Zoom application, due to the COVID-19 state of emergency preventing in-person meetings. Atwood announced the online participants.

**2 – Vote on minutes from February 11, 2020 and April 9, 2020: Jessica Atwood, FRCOG**

T. Anderson moved to approve the February 11, 2020 minutes, MJ Adams seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously with B. Smith abstaining.
MJ Adams moved to approve the April 9, 2020 minutes, with clerical amendments; T. Anderson seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

### 3 – Update on economic recovery efforts due to COVID-19 pandemic: L. Dunlavy, FRCOG

L. Dunlavy reported that the FRCOG is communicating with Franklin Region Economic Development Initiative (FREDI) organizations (including Community Action, Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, Franklin County Community Development Corporation (FCCDC), Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority, Greenfield Community College, MassHire Franklin-Hampshire Career Center and Workforce Board), as well as other local organizations and leaders including CISA, Community Foundation of Western Mass, Franklin County Sheriff’s office, Franklin County Probate Judge, GADC, and Mayor Wedegartner to ensure that local need are addressed in the post-pandemic recovery. She continued that the FRCOG is also supporting the MA Rural Policy Advisory Commission as it too is looking for opportunities to collaborate and jointly advocate. Lists of priorities and immediate needs – with sections on economic relief, municipal relief and infrastructure – are being developed and will be shared with legislators Comerford, Hines, Blais, Mark, and Whipps, and with aides to McGovern and Neal.

J. Waite reported on that the FCCDC’s efforts to secure and distribute federal, state, and local emergency funding. It has been busy facilitating applications to the US Small Business Administration’s Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). At last count, $50 million of this federal funding was distributed through Greenfield Savings Bank and Greenfield Cooperative Bank. Waite anticipates applying for additional small business revolving loan fund from the U.S. Economic Development Administration. He continued that towns are working on using their federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) money to award small grants to struggling businesses. The FCCDC is also working with CISA to establish the Emergency Farm Fund, which has provided fourteen farms with $25,000 in 0% interest loans, Waite reported.

The Franklin County Chamber of Commerce has been functioning as a vehicle of information coming from FCCDC, the City of Greenfield and MassHire Franklin Hampshire Career Center (MHFHCC), D. Syzial reported. She has noted a shift in conversation toward re-opening, and is attending weekly preparatory meetings of MA Regional Tourism Council executive directors.

The MHFHCC continues to field approximately 100 calls per day regarding Unemployment Insurance (UI), T. Anderson said, and that many this week were regarding new Pandemic Unemployment Assistance for self-employed and gig workers. The MHFHCC also has been focused on helping local businesses to navigate the transition between utilizing UI and re-opening with PPP funding, directing employers to the state’s COVID-19 Long Term Care Facility Jobs Portal, and converting their workshops for job-seekers for on-line delivery.

The MassHire Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board’s Patricia Crosby reported that they are awaiting news on their application to the National Emergency Grant Funding program; that Greenfield Community College is now offering an on-line information session about its manufacturing training classes; and that the School-to-Careers program is newly focused on graduating high school seniors. She is seeing more information on the state’s efforts to identify companies interested in re-tooling their manufacturing facilities to produce personal protective equipment, she said. She has begun developing the annual proposal for state funding to aid local manufacturing. As a member of the
Gill Arts Council, she noted that Western MA artists have received 57 of the 272 $1,000 COVID Relief Fund grants from the MA Arts Council.

T. Anderson explained that local unemployment numbers are not yet available for March and April due to a data glitch. When they are released, however, they will include figures pertaining to self-employed and gig workers.

### 4 – Review and discuss the Preliminary Draft 2020 CEDS Plan: Jessica Atwood, FRCOG

J. Atwood reviewed the Preliminary Draft 2020 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Plan, inviting suggestions for incorporation before she releases the document on May 8 for a 30-day public comment period. She highlighted changes made since the April meeting, and potential additional changes, mostly relating to developments due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

To provide context on the current COVID-19 pandemic crisis, data was added from the March 2020 Pioneer Valley Business Survey Findings for Franklin County and from monthly unemployment and UI Claimant data (rather than only annual data). Throughout the document, context will be provided about potential impacts, such as potential population increase post-pandemic, similar to that experienced by Berkshire County post-9/11 or the closure of businesses.

A new section was added to Chapter: Summary Background about economic development incentives and related programs, like the federal Opportunity Zone program. The new Chapter 3: Economic Resiliency reviews vulnerabilities, steady-state initiatives (e.g. mitigation from long-term changes), responsive initiatives (e.g. mitigation from short-term impacts), and refers to specific goals, objectives and the action plan in Chapter 6.

Atwood reviewed Chapter 6: Goals, Objectives and Action Plan with Committee members. The draft goals were developed based on the Summary Background data, SWOT and Vision, and have been revised according to the April meeting discussion.

Since the last meeting, a new goal added was: “Goal 2. Implement efforts to sustainably grow the population of Franklin County and to make Franklin County a more welcoming and inclusive place.” The corresponding draft goal’s objectives are:

- Objective 2A. Examine and strategize how to overcome workplace cultures that create structural and institutional barriers to equity.
- Objective 2B. Provide technical assistance to implement local planning that encourages sustainable growth and economic development, and enhances the overall health and quality of life of the region.

Atwood noted the language change in Goal 6. “Encourage economic security for individuals, and equitable wealth creation and financial security in the region.” J. Waite suggested a reference to “pathways to economic security” be added.

Atwood reviewed the draft Action Plan, which included projects reviewed at the previous meeting as well as new activities. Examples of new activities include tasks for FRCOG staff, including: staff will complete the scope of work and reporting requirements of the EDA Partnership Planning award; and staff participation and leadership in collaborative capacity building and leveraging of resources with
the CEDS Committee, Franklin Regional Economic Development Initiative (FREDI), the Economic Development Partners group of western Mass, the MA CEDS/EDD Practitioners group, and the Rural Policy Advisory Commission.

Another new project included in the draft was the Strengthening Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Franklin County Project, which seeks to develop and encourage adoption of workplace policies and practices to deconstruct white dominance, identify and reduce bias, and facilitate the hiring of people of color and people from other marginalized groups, and to ensure workplaces are welcoming and healthy for everyone. J. Waite announced that the Welcoming and Belonging Group, which includes the FCCDC with GCC and FRCOG, applied for and will receive an award through the MA Department of Public Health to promote such culture change in area businesses.

Other activities and projects added to the Action Plan, included:

- Local Technical Assistance – FRCOG staff to provide planning technical assistance to municipalities, such as through an updated zoning bylaws and subdivision regulations, Master Plan, Open Space and Recreation Plan, village center studies, and similar planning efforts.
- Growth Management Strategy - Advocate for a study of infrastructure, regulations and employment needs to accommodate and welcome people moving from urban to rural communities.
- Bridge of Flowers and Water Infrastructure Project - Structural improvements to bridge and public water infrastructure.
- FRCOG Brownfields Program - Administer a brownfields program to conduct assessments and support the remediation and redevelopment of sites.
- Commercial/Industrial Site Promotion - Track sites and support the development or redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties, including sites under municipal ownership and in Opportunity Zones.
- Last Mile Broadband in Unserved Areas - Advocate for the elimination or reduction of municipal capital cost burden in unserved communities, in light of anticipated municipal revenue declines due to pandemic impacts.
- Transportation Planning - Staff to conduct transportation planning program to forward investments in roads, bridges, transit, passenger rail, Complete Streets, culvert assessments, and recreational trails.
- Establish Valley Flyer - Market the pilot passenger rail service to increase ridership and establish the service permanently by funding operations and the acquisition of train sets.
- East-West Passenger Rail Service - Advocate for planning and implementation of rail service between Boston and Pittsfield, and between Boston and Greenfield.
- Innovative Public Transit Services - Invest in regional on demand micro-transit services beyond the current pilot period.
- Workforce Training for Unemployed Workers - Development and implement new training programs for workers in COVID-19 impacted industries, including agricultural, food service, retail trade and others; and continue with advanced manufacturing training program to meet needs of employers.
- Response and Recovery Strategy - Examine the experience from the COVID-19 pandemic and develop strategies to improve response and recovery, including improving communication and support to business community, coordination about regional organizations and resources.
- Resiliency and Economic Development Alignment – FRCOG staff to better align economic development resilience best practices with local planning efforts through state programs, such as Green Communities, hazard mitigation plans, and MVP plans.
There was a discussion about two projects in New Salem submitted for inclusion in the 2020 CEDS Plan. The projects propose to restore and rehabilitate two municipal buildings for community purposes. J. Atwood noted that while they are worthwhile and important community projects, they do not meet the criteria of resulting in direct job creation. It was determined that the projects will be included in the Plan’s appendix.

J. Atwood reviewed the timeline for finalizing the Plan and submitting it to the EDA by the June 30, 2020 deadline. She asked that Committee members please contact her with any additional comments about the draft the Plan.

| 5 – Other business not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance, and adjourn. |

The next scheduled CEDS Committee meeting is Monday, June 8, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. J. Waite made a motion to adjourn the meeting, MJ Adams seconded the motion, and the meeting adjourned at 2:16 p.m.

Documents distributed/presentations viewed:

- Agenda
- 2020-02-11 CEDS Minutes DRAFT
- 2020-4-09 CEDS Minutes DRAFT
- Presentation

Respectfully submitted by:

Gary Dillensneider, Chair
Franklin Regional Council of Governments
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee

**Date:** June 8, 2020  
**Time:** 3:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Virtual Meeting via Zoom due to COVID-19 state of emergency. (Meeting ID: 640 658 461)  
**Duration:** 1 hour  
**Facilitator:** J. Atwood

**CEDS Committee Attendees:**  
- MJ Adams, City of Greenfield  
- Marie Breheny, Greenfield Community College  
- Patricia Crosby, MassHire Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board  
- Gary Dillensneider, FCCDC Loan Review Committee  
- Tom Hutcheson, Franklin Regional Planning Board  
- Walter Ramsey, Town of Montague  
- Nan Riebschlaeger, Wendell Energy Committee and Quabbin Mediation  
- Diana Szynal, Franklin County Chamber of Commerce  
- John Waite, Franklin County Community Development Corporation

**Guests:**  
- Judy Raper, Greenfield Community College  
- Kristin Cole, Greenfield Community College

**FRCOG Staff:**  
- Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director  
- Peggy Sloan, Director of Planning and Development  
- Jessica Atwood, Economic Development Program Manager  
- Liz Jacobson-Carroll, Administrative Services Assistant

1 – Call the meeting to order, and round of introductions: Gary Dillensneider

Atwood called the meeting to order at 3:04 PM. The meeting was held online, via Zoom, due to the COVID-19 state of emergency preventing in-person meetings. Atwood announced the participants.

2 – Vote to Approve Minutes from May 4, 2020: Gary Dillensneider

Adams moved to approve the May 4, 2020 minutes, with an amended attendee list. Hutcheson seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

3 – Update on economic recovery efforts due to COVID-19 pandemic: Linda Dunlavy and Jessica Atwood, FRCOG
Atwood and Dunlavy described efforts to secure federal, regional and local funding. Atwood reported on recent applications to two sources through the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the CARES Act. The first is FRCOG’s request for supplemental Economic Development District (EDD) planning funds to create a recovery and resilience plan, to provide business technical assistance, to plan for water/wastewater critical infrastructure, and to provide technical assistance on CEDS projects. It is a non-competitive grant; application approval is pending. The second is FCCDC’s application to the EDA to re-capitalise its Small Business Revolving Loan Fund with $730,000.

There are multiple regional and local efforts underway as well. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) -funded small business forgivable loan programs are currently available to Greenfield, Montague ($50k), Buckland and Shelburne ($50k). Adams reported that the City of Greenfield is leading an effort to make a larger allocation available to all 26 towns in the region. Waite reported that a 2nd round of emergency funding for farms is being administered by CISA and FCCDC. The FRCOG, FCCC, and FCCDC are coordinating the collective purchasing and distribution of PPE for businesses, organizations and municipal governments; so far, 51 of these have been served by the ongoing program, and more are expected to engage by the June 12th deadline for the second round. Atwood reported that an additional resources includes an on-going webinar series for small businesses led by MSBDCN, FCCDC and others, and a MAPC white paper on how municipal governments can help small businesses. Atwood noted that FRCOG is also advocating for better alignment of EDA and state funding programs.

Waite reported that the FCCDC is assisting many businesses in applying for PPP funds, and processing unemployment insurance paperwork. He remains optimistic regarding the potential for capitalizing a private fund to assist businesses that are not eligible for the various public/government programs. Municipalities can assist businesses by letting them use public sidewalks, he said. Atwood noted that the state recently adjusted its rules regarding the serving of alcohol outdoors.


### 4 – Review comments and vote to approve Final Draft 2020 CEDS Plan: Jessica Atwood, FRCOG

Atwood reviewed substantive additions made to the Draft CEDS Plan during the 30-day public comment period. These include the addition of photos and final formatting; a statement regarding the availability of the plan and updates over the 5-year implementation period; a timeline of state and federal government actions due to the COVID-19 pandemic; a graphic explaining MA’s phased re-opening; a snapshot of the availability of local housing; and detailed monthly Franklin/Hampshire labor force and unemployment data through April 2020. Further, she added the importance of seasonal workers from outside the US, and the significance of federal policy, to the local agricultural industry. The CEDS Plan now includes a section on the availability of childcare and eldercare services as a factor impacting economic performance, and their particular importance during the pandemic. At the suggestion of members, Atwood will mention concerns regarding fraudulent unemployment claims, and add reference to the importance of homecare workers in stemming the spread of COVID-19 and economic recovery.

On the Action Plan Table listing 49 projects, at the request of the EDA, Atwood highlighted those with the most significant regional impact:
• Strengthening Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Franklin County
• The Mohawk Trail Woodland Partnership Forest Center
• Northern Tier 2.0 (small business technical assistance to build capacity, especially to pandemic-affected businesses)
• Capitalize Small Business Revolving Loan Fund
• GCC Rural Innovation Center
• Franklin County Public Water/Sewer system Strategic Plan
• Montague’s Canal District Master Plan and Investment Strategy
• Greenfield’s Industrial Park Expansion
• Erving IP Mill Redevelopment
• Establish Valley Flyer
• Innovative Public Transit Services

Waite initiated a discussion regarding the possible inclusion of a project to build regional food security and infrastructure. He mentioned the MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs offering grants for this purpose. Hutcheson and Sloan referenced former FRCOG staffer Mary Chicoine’s work on a regional food security plan. Atwood will research and include a project in the Action Plan.

Further changes include the addition of the Greenfield Anaerobic Digester project; amendment of the Last Mile Broadband in Unserved Areas project to address municipal operational costs; the editing of several sections to emphasize the importance of not just recovering, but building resiliency; and the addition of town-level census data tables. Discussion included the intent to expand use of the planned anaerobic digester by additional municipalities; the GCC Innovation Center’s inclusion of the formerly incarcerated in its target clientele; and the long trend of a decreasing average wage; and the need to monitor demographics with an eye toward regional housing needs.

Adams moved to approve the final 2020 Franklin County CEDS Plan, Crosby seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

5 – Other business not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance, and adjourn: Jessica Atwood, FRCOG

Atwood reviewed the CEDS Plan schedule, noting that the EDD Governing Board will vote to accept it on June 11, the Franklin Regional Planning Board will vote to endorse it on June 25, and FRCOG will submit it to the US EDA by June 30, 2020.

Waite moved to adjourn the meeting, Adams seconded the motion, and the meeting adjourned at 4:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Gary Dillensneider, Chair
Franklin Regional Council of Governments
Executive Committee & Greater Franklin County Economic Development District Board — MINUTES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date &amp; Time:</th>
<th>Thursday, August 8, 2019/ 5:00 p.m.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td>FRCOG Offices, 12 Olive Street, Greenfield, MA – Second Floor, Room 221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator:</td>
<td>Jay DiPucchio, Chair</td>
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</tbody>
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**Representatives Present:**
- Jay DiPucchio, Regionally Elected
- Jim Basford, FRPB Appointee
- Bill Perlman, Regionally Elected
- Kevin Fox, Council Appointee
- Bill Martin, Council Appointee

**Staff Members Present:**
- Linda Dunlavy, Executive
- Linda Gross, Asst. Finance Dir. & IT Services
- Bob Dean, Director of Regional Services

1. **Review and adopt 5.9.19 Executive Committee minutes**

   Jay D. opened the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

   Bill P. moved to adopt the 6.13.19 minutes. Jim B. seconded. The motion passed 4-0, with one abstention.

2. **Convene as Economic Development District (EDD) Governing Board**

   Members read over the short bios on the list of four suggested appointees to the 2020-2024 CEDS committee (see handout).

   Bill P. moved to appoint the candidates on the suggested list as CEDS members. Bill M. seconded; motion passed unanimously.

3. **Receive county road petition from Greenfield, re: Woodard Road, and set date/time for View and Public Hearing**

   Bob Dean presented the petition from the City of Greenfield to discontinue portions of Woodard Road (1889 Franklin County Layout of South Shelburne Road, now known as Woodard Road) between Mohawk Trail (Route 2A) and Shelburne Road. The proposed discontinuance would transfer the road from county road to city road. Members examined the proposed plan.

   Bob asked Mayor Martin why the city is seeking to discontinue only the portions on either side of the property owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts — where the Registry of Motor Vehicles houses an office — rather than the entire stretch of road. The Mayor allowed that there was no other reason other than uncertainty regarding the status of the road. Bob suggested it would be cleaner to discontinue that entire stretch of the county road and to transfer it all to the City of Greenfield. The Mayor agreed saying he would provide an update to the submitted plan.
Asked if they would like to attend a formal View of the site, the committee declined, as all members are aware of the road’s features.

Bill P moved to accept the petition and to set September 12 at 5 p.m. in the Transit Center as the date/time for the public hearing. Kevin seconded the motion, which passed 4-0 in favor, with the Greenfield Mayor Martin abstaining.

4. FRCOG IT security presentation (at the request of Bill Perlman)

Bill P. described IT security measures he learned about at a recent conference, remarking that there is nothing electronic that can’t be opened from outside the organization. He said he heard stories about data hackers demanding ransom, blocking hackers, and so on. Public agencies are paying the ransom because the cost of reconfiguring data is more expensive than paying the ransom.

Linda D. agreed, saying that no one in the world is immune from hackers unless they never use a computer. With the help of Linda Gross, she presented the committee with the history of the move to the transit center and the current status of the FRCOG’s IT safety and security measures, which include: (see handout for details).

- Servers backed up with files daily on-site
- Servers backed up weekly off-site (can never lose more than a week’s amount of data) and kept at the bank.
- Firewall installed
- Employees must use VPN to get through firewall when working off site
- Accounting uses separate server with stricter access protocol
- Email is screened and quarantined

Linda D. explained that the IT maintenance contract is with Northeast IT (NEIT), with whom staff consults regarding considerations for improving network security, and for budgeting purposes. FRCOG is considering cloud computing, but staff are not convinced yet. Linda and Linda answered members’ questions about the details of the back-ups, quarantined emails, and the FRCOG’s compliance with laws around personnel records.

5. Review and discuss draft FCECS documents

Memo of Understanding (MOU) between FRCOG and Municipalities (see handout)

Linda told committee members that the Mayor asked to edit the Greenfield agreement, so staff decided to update all of the agreements early, given the likelihood of the upcoming move to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Interoperable Radio System (CoMIRS). Referring to the draft MOU, Linda walked the committee through the following changes in the following sections:

Last “whereas paragraph” — CoMIRS added “…the signatories of the agreement commit to remaining a party to the agreement until the FCECS is fully decommissioned…”

Option to Withdraw Section — Changed from a year’s notice to 90 days, and added that if the user withdraws they are removed from the CoMIRS system or placed last on migration schedule.
Decommissioning — Added this section, stating that after paying all maintenance and migration costs, FRCOG will return any remaining money to towns.

Term of Agreement — Changed to “3 years” from “3 years plus automatic renewals.”

On September 5, the FRCOG will host a countywide meeting at GCC with all stakeholders and state officials to discuss the migration to CoMIRS. Bill M. asked if the intent of the current system is to continue to accumulate capital funds. Yes, for now, Linda replied, until we have a clear sense of the time we can shut down the system. Until then, we need to keep FCECS running.

FCECS Oversight Committee Operating Procedures
Linda explained the need to change the FCECS operating procedures document to reflect the transition from an external system manager to an internal staff member. The process for making changes to FCECS operating procedures requires staff to notify the members of the FCECS oversight committee and the FRCOG Executive Committee at least 14 days before a meeting at which proposed changes will be considered for a vote. While exploring the history of how FCECS money is authorized to be spent, staff drafted updated language that incorporates the new internal system manager position and better delineates how decisions are made between Oversight Committee meetings.

Bill P. remarked that the Oversight Committee usually gets a system report each month at meetings and discusses any need for spending out of the norm. He explained that if a microwave dish falls, for example, it must be fixed immediately, before the next Oversight Committee meeting. Members talked about the definition of an “emergency.” They discussed the current status of the system; how decisions will be made to repair towers going forward; and a triage procedure that considers the importance of dysfunctional towers relative to others, to determine where to best use obsolete, irreplaceable parts. Linda assured the committee that staff are in constant communication with the state EOTSS about FCECS. A draft of the revised Operating Procedure manual will be sent to the Oversight Committee and then to the Executive Committee, Linda said.

6. Business not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance
Linda reported that she was recently on a conference call with Representative Blais and Senator Comerford about wastewater issues in towns. As an outcome of that call, in late October FRCOG will convene a forum focused on wastewater issues in Franklin County towns, inviting state officials and elected officials county-wide. Mayor Martin remarked that sludge-hauling costs have meant a $140,000 spending increase to the City of Greenfield.

Jim B. moved to adjourn. Kevin F. seconded. Meeting adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

Documents Distributed:
• Agenda
• 6.13.19 Draft Executive Committee/ EDD Board Minutes
• EDD Governing Board — CEDS Committee appointee request
• Petition from the City of Greenfield for the discontinuance of parts of Woodard Road
• FRCOG IT Safety and Security Memo, dated August 6
• Draft Memorandum of Agreement By and Between the FRCOG and FCECS Oversight Committee and Users of the FCECS
1. Review and adopt 4.9.20 Executive Committee Minutes

Jay convened the meeting at 5:03 p.m. Bill moved adoption of the minutes of the 4.9.20 meeting as presented. Jim seconded the motion, which passed with all in favor.

2. Convene as Economic Development District Governing Board for 2020 Franklin County CEDS plan discussion

Jessica reported that the 5-year 2020 Franklin County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Plan has been generated. Created using the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) framework, the plan maintains the region’s eligibility for select federal EDA grant programs. It serves as a roadmap for strategic partners to advance policies, programs, and projects that support economic opportunity for all and contribute to the well-being of Franklin County communities.

The Plan reflects the best information and strategies available at the time of its creation. As datasets are often released with a one- to two-year lag time, the plan does not reflect the economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis. However, when possible, monthly or quarterly data is included to present the most current information available. Thus, the plan includes findings from a business survey conducted in late March 2020, to provide an understanding of the pandemic’s economic impacts. The Action Plan describes the projects and activities to be pursued over the next five years to meet the goals and objectives identified. Projects and activities were identified by program partners and/or submitted through an open proposal process. More than 30 proposals were submitted.

The 30-day public comment period closes June 7. The CEDS plan is available for review on the FRCOG website and anyone can comment via email or phone call. The plan will be considered for
endorsement on June 11 by the EDD board. The regional planning board will review it June 25, and the final plan will be submitted to the USEDA by June 30, 2020. Members commended the work of Jessica and the other planners. Linda explained that time was short this year Jessica drafted and redrafted the CEDS within two weeks!

### 3. COVID Activity Update

Linda described a regional initiative for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) procurement FRCOG and other regional agencies have been considering. The county’s reopening will require safety precautions, and employers must have adequate PPE, which the state will likely not help them acquire. Could or should FRCOG do a collective PPE purchase for Franklin County?

With the FC Chamber of Commerce and FRCOG’s Health and Medical Coordinating Coalition (HMCC) staff, Linda surveyed all Chamber members asking if they needed help buying PPE. Of the 75 survey responses, 72 asked for help. Along with the individual input of Bill and Jay, staff discussed a FRCOG collective PPE purchase and distribution to businesses to help the region open safely. To do so would require funding up front, and thus, approval of the full FRCOG Council.

In a recent call, the legislative delegation said they believe that the system for certification of reopening businesses, and statewide standardization and enforcement will be challenging for small, rural communities. They suggested creating a rural reopening board to provide assistance and guidance to the four western MA counties to make sure the 413 opens safely. Legislators want to be on the board to advocate for small rural communities. Jay said the FRCOG is seen as a convener of collective boards, who could serve in some capacity in neighboring regions.

Linda suggested the FRCOG convene an emergency Council meeting to discuss with municipalities a possible PPE purchase and forming a re-opening guidance board, an initiative that partners public health workers and businesses figuring out how to reopen. Phoebe and Bill both advocated for cross-town and cross-county standards. Jim wondered if the FRCOG might be at cross-purposes, endeavoring to get the equipment businesses need to survive, but doing so without guidelines for the region. Jim felt the reopening seemed designed for failure, with businesses opening, people complaining, health agents coming and closing them. Phoebe reminded the committee that health agents have experience, and that communication systems are set up to push for clear guidance and clear standards. The legislative reopening board has a variety of leaders working together, not just boards of health. There is a support structure, said Linda.

With Executive Committee approval, Linda said FRCOG would try to take a lead in the collective purchase for businesses. Upfront funding will require a Council meeting. The quicker the purchase, the better, she said, adding that if the committee’s not ready, they could wait until next week to decide.

Jay said because there have been many positive responses and there is strong interest in FRCOG accessing money for an initial purchase, as long as the businesses are paying for the goods we are buying, the Council will be on board with that. It’s a good opportunity to bring everyone on board with our purpose. Bill said he had no problem with FRCOG purchasing, but doesn't want the FRCOG to do the job of the Chamber. Linda said the Chamber had reached out, not only to its members, but also to the broader community, with help from the Franklin County Community Development Corporation.
(FCCDC) and the Communities Involved in Sustainable Agriculture (CISA). Members felt comfortable with scheduling a remote FRCOG Council meeting next week.

4. COVID time use update and FY20 year-end budget projections
Claire reported that staff are using the “COVID time” benefit primarily for release of work, because they can’t be productive for reasons related to the pandemic. Staff have appreciated the benefit and have been respectful. Projections for the amount of funding needed for this benefit are holding.

Fin Com was advised to expect end-of-year budget amendments — not to the general fund, which would require approval of the full Council — but to municipal programs. The finance committee will make these amendments.

5. FRCOG use of state emergency response funding
Phoebe reported that FRCOG was named one of six crisis response affiliates for the state and received $150,000 for response. FRCOG hired two new nurses, provided case management for 14 Cooperative Public Health Service member towns, plus four other towns (Northfield, among them, plans to join CPHS in July).

Over the last two months, the CPHS helped improve the statewide contact tracing collaborative; interpreted application and response to the Governor’s executive orders for various people and organized entities; ran public health newspaper ads; met frequently with the MA COVID command center, all health districts and boards of health, MA COVID response affiliates, the MAPHCO emergency prep coalition, and the MA coalition for local public health; and conferenced weekly with the healthcare stakeholders, MACC partners, and local public health nurses and agents who are part of the re-opening working group.

The FRCOG distributed funds to towns with their own PH Nursing programs, including $40,000 to Greenfield, and various amounts to Wendell and Leverett. Future CARES Act funds will go directly to the towns. The CPHS will begin to stand down now as the state has evolved its contact tracing structure. The whole crisis response process revealed the workings of the state’s health systems and gave partners great insight into what needs to be done to change it, Phoebe added.

6. FCECS update
The COMIRS project of transferring the emergency communication system to the state was stalled while EOTTS did a capacity study that found that Franklin County needed a new system channel. The state has since funded the channel and is moving forward with the project. Barnstable and Franklin County will be the first to migrate. Recent modeling of existing coverage and upgraded coverage find it to be comparable. Although we know the service will likely be better, we need to make sure towns understand some communities will be without 100% coverage, even with the transfer, said Linda.

Radio purchasing begins in early FY21. EOTTS said grant funds will go to the FRCOG, who will do an inventory of types of radios and accessories and be responsible for the logistics of the radio purchasing. Bill added that staff will create a website for towns to use when ordering. This is delayed
because staff are swamped with HMCC activity during the coronavirus pandemic. The order sheet will be developed and prototyped soon.

Members wondered what the long-term continuing role of FRCOG will be as the transition is made. Linda said staff and FCECS oversight committee members are asking the same question. Likely, EOTTS will require each town department to have an MOU, and demand that FCECS use their protocols. EOTTS is hoping for a single point of contact. The FRCOG role might be that of the single point of contact for all departments. Discussions start in early June.

7. Business not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance

Phoebe announced that four of the grants focused on policies systems and envisioning change were awarded to FRCOG to address social determinants of public health.

Bill made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jim seconded the motion, which passed with all in favor. The meeting adjourned at 6:04 p.m.

Documents Distributed:

- Agenda
- Draft minutes of the April 9, 2020 meeting
- Slides: Draft CEDS Plan Overview
- Slides: COVID Emergency Funds for Franklin County
1. Review and adopt 5.14.20 Executive Committee and 5.20.20 Finance Committee minutes

Lynn Sibley convened the Finance Committee meeting at 5:06 p.m. John moved adoption of the 5.20.20 minutes as presented. Ellen seconded the motion, which passed with all in favor.

Bill Perlman opened the Executive Committee meeting at 5:44 p.m. Jim made a motion to adopt the minutes of 5.14.20. Bill seconded the motion, which passed with all in favor.

2. Executive Committee Convene as Economic Development District Governing Board for 2020 Franklin County CEDS Plan review of final draft and vote to adopt

Before the CEDS presentation, Jessica alerted the group that FRCOG had submitted an US Economic Development Administration (EDA) application for non-competitive, supplemental funding made available through from the CARES Act for up to $400,000 for EDD planning. If awarded, this funding could assist the EDD with such initiatives as an economic recovery and resilience plan; business technical assistance; a water/wastewater critical infrastructure plan; and CEDS Project technical assistance.

2020 Franklin County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Plan
Jessica reported that comments received during the 30-day public comment period were incorporated into the plan. Revisions involved fixing minor typos and making clarifications; fixing the 2018 Average
Annual Pay by MA Counties chart; adding updated COVID-19-related information, adding photos, and doing final formatting. Substantive content changes included:

- Updating COVID-19 timeline and adding Reopening Massachusetts phases graphic and photo
- Updating monthly labor force, unemployment, and UI Claimant data
- Noting the importance of seasonal guest workers in the Agriculture industry section
- Adding a section on child- and elder-care services as factors which impact economic performance
- Incorporating more info from the original proposal profile into the Action Plan description
- Amending project information in the Action Plan table
- Adding the Greenfield anaerobic digester and the food security infrastructure projects to the Action Plan table
- Highlighting 13 projects of the total 50 as those with the greatest potential for transformative regional impact
- Adding town-level demographic data tables

Regarding COVID-specific updates to labor force data, the CEDS reports that in March and April the region suffered an 11% decline in labor and a 330% increase in the number of unemployed. The greatest number of unemployment claims came from those who work in food services, healthcare and social services, retail, manufacturing, and construction.

Jessica explained that, the final CEDS Plan was approved by the CEDS Committee at their 6.8.20 meeting. If adopted by this body, the Franklin Regional Planning Board will vote to endorse the CEDS Plan on 6.25.20, and the Plan will then be submitted to the US EDA by June 30.
Bill said it was an outstanding piece of work and that he learned a tremendous amount.

Jim moved to adopt the final draft of the CEDS Plan. Danielle seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

3. Review of COVID time and extension discussion.

The cost of the COVID-19 benefit over the past 12-weeks was $16,000 and the estimated projection for remaining time to spend the approved $30,000 is 10 more weeks. Claire asked if the committee wished to extend the period for staff use into FY21.

Linda explained that the benefit was originally created for use by staff with remote-work childcare issues; for those who might have trouble staying busy while working at home, inspectors among them; and for staff who became ill or needed to quarantine, making it hard to do their work. She reported that the benefit predominantly is used by staff with children.

Ellen moved to extend the previously approved COVID-time benefit (release from work for reasons related to the pandemic) into FY21, capped at the originally approved $30,000. John seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

4. Review PPE purchases and clarify meaning of full Council’s motion
Linda reminded the committees that the Council approved a multi-round collective procurement of personal protection equipment (PPE) for local businesses, non-profit agencies, and municipalities, to help them with reopening. The first round has been purchased and was distributed yesterday. FRCOG could not buy taxable products, so the county Chamber of Commerce funded a $5150 purchase for 13 taxable entities and FRCOG funded the $33,330 purchase for 28 tax-exempt entities. Invoices for round one are to be sent this week and FRCOG is now accepting orders for round two, as towns have firmed up their town meetings and election needs.

Linda asked members of both committees to clarify the meaning of the May 21 Council vote approving use of up to $50,000 for PPE. She asked: Was the Council referring to a $50,000 spending cap? Was $50,000 the upper limit of money due to FRCOG at any time? Or did it refer to a $50,000 potential impact to the general fund -- a total loss?

Lynn said she interpreted the vote as a mandate that FRCOG never have a financial investment of more than $50,000. Members agreed on this, feeling that the full Council understood that FRCOG would use the money received from first-round invoicing to buy the next round of equipment -- that the $50,000 was intended to be a cap on expense outstanding. Linda reported that $33,330 of the $50,000 has been spent so far, and as of 3 o’clock this afternoon, $10,000 worth of equipment has been ordered for round two. The balance today is $43,330, but because round two ordering ends tomorrow, it may not be an issue, she said. Invoices will go out this week.

Both the Finance and Executive Committees agreed that the Council vote meant that the FRCOG should not have more than $50,000 due to it from the entities ordering PPE at any time. Members expressed frustration with the limitations of the Council amendment, which halved the original $100,000 motion. Linda added that the FRCOG would continue to do a PPE collective purchase until there is no longer an interest, or there is evidence that pricing is not improved with FRCOG involvement.

5. Regional Services Assessment discussion

Anticipating local aid cuts in the state budget, five or six towns have asked if FRCOG is making changes or reductions to the regional service assessment. Towns are feeling the budget pressures as they navigate into FY21. Currently the regional services assessment is a 1% increase. Claire asked the Finance Committee if FRCOG should take action and reduce the assessment now, or look ahead to FY22, which may be worse. She suggested a commitment to level funding FY22 could happen now.

Linda reported that the finance department anticipates a very strong end to FY20. Possible options for assisting towns include a rebate, which is limiting for towns; doing nothing now and seeing how FY21 goes, possibly reducing assessments down the road; or reducing them now by more than 1%.

Michelle offered that the committee wait-and-see what happens to local aid, as there are rumors of 20 to 25% cuts. The consensus of Finance Committee members was to come back to the idea of exploring a reduction in regional services once more is known about the state budget impacts.

6. Business not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of meeting
Ellen moved Finance Committee adjournment. John seconded the motion. Danielle moved Executive Committee adjournment, Jim seconded. Both meetings adjourned at 6:08 PM.

Documents Distributed:

- Agenda
- Draft 5.14.20 Executive Committee minutes
- Draft 5.20.20 Finance Committee minutes
- Slides: Draft CEDS Plan Overview
- Slides: COVID Emergency Funds for Franklin County
Date & Time: Thursday, July 16, 2020 at 5:15 p.m.
Location: Remote meeting using videoconferencing technology
Facilitator: Jay DiPucchio, Chair

Executive Committee/EDD Governing Board Representatives Present:
- Jay DiPucchio, Regionally Elected
- Jim Basford, FRPB Appointee
- Roxann Wedegartner, Council Appointee
- Kevin Fox, Colrain Representative

Staff Members Present:
- Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director
- Rebekah Boyd, Admin Services Coordinator
- Jessica Atwood, Economic Development Program Manager

1. Review and adopt 6.11.20 Executive Committee/EDD Governing Board minutes
Jay D. convened the meeting at 5:15 p.m. Jim B. moved adoption of the 6.11.20 minutes as presented. Kevin F. seconded the motion, which passed with all in favor.

Jessica Atwood thanked the committee for convening prior to the full Council meeting to review and approve the minutes, explaining that the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) has requested a copy of the approved minutes for the June 11, 2020 meeting in which the board adopted the 2020 Franklin County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Plan.

2. Business not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of meeting
No unanticipated business was discussed.

Kevin F. moved committee adjournment. Roxann W. seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:22 PM.

Documents Distributed:
- Agenda
- Draft 6.11.20 Executive Committee/EDD Governing Board minutes