



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Franklin Regional Planning Board

Date:	December 3, 2015
Time:	6:00 p.m.
Location:	JWO Transit Center, 12 Olive Street, Greenfield, MA
Duration:	2 hours
Facilitator:	Jerry Lund, Chair

Attendees:

- Sam Lovejoy, Montague At-Large
- John Ryan, New Salem At-Large
- John Baronas, Deerfield Planning Board
- Thomas Hutcheson, Conway Select Board
- Tom Miner, Shelburne At-Large
- Ted Cady, Warwick Planning Board
- Mike Shaffer, Erving Planning Board
- James Basford, Orange At-Large
- Jeannie Schermesser, Erving At-Large
- Jennifer Gross, Wendell Select Board
- Cam Stevenson, Shelburne Planning Board
- David Travers, Heath Select Board
- Michael Nelson, Montague Select Board
- Kenneth Miller, Ashfield Planning Board
- Tom Herrick, Sunderland At-Large
- Tracy Rogers, Northfield Select Board
- Patricia Marcus, Greenfield At-Large

Guests

- Nancy Hazard, Greening Greenfield

Staff:

- Peggy Sloan, Planning Director
- Gretchen Johnson, Planning Grant Administrator
- Kimberly Noake MacPhee, Natural Resource and Land Use Planner
- Elizabeth Giannini, Senior Transportation Planner II
- Maureen Mullaney, Transportation and GIS Program Manager II

1 – Introductions: S. Lovejoy (First Vice Chair)

S. Lovejoy, First Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A round of introductions followed.

2 – Review and Approval of October 22, 2015 FRPB meeting minutes

T. Cady MOVED to approve the October 22, 2015 minutes. T. Miner SECONDED. T. Rogers abstained because she was not in attendance at the last meeting. The minutes were APPROVED with one abstention.

3 – Presentation on Transportation Planning Projects (Alternative Transportation & Expanded Mass in Motion): M. Mullaney, FRCOG

M. Mullaney gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Alternative Transportation maps. Copies of the updated FRTA transit routes maps were passed around. M. Mullaney explained that the Alternative Transportation maps were designed to provide information on how to get around without driving. The maps show routes of sidewalks, bike routes and bus routes. The maps include the locations of parks, schools, libraries, medical facilities, grocery stores and farmers markets. The maps also provide safety tips and “how to” information. Website resources are also listed.

S. Lovejoy asked about the climbing lane on Route 2 up Greenfield Mountain and the turn onto Maple Street in Shelburne from Route 2. M. Mullaney responded that the latest accident on Greenfield Mountain was attributed to driver error. The Maple Street turn doesn't have a significant crash history but MassDOT will revisit the data from that area. The FRCOG will be conducting updated traffic counts for that intersection.

P. Marcus asked if there are imminent plans to fix the potholes on the Cheapside bridge. M. Mullaney replied that there is a project planned for that intersection but she will check to see if the improvements include resurfacing of the bridge.

B. Giannini gave a PowerPoint Presentation on the Mass in Motion (MiM) grant. MiM is a statewide program that promotes opportunities for healthy eating and active living in the places people live, learn, work and play. Since 2012, the FRCOG has coordinated the MiM initiatives for Franklin County, which have included:

- Promoting Complete Street policies
- Encouraging joint use agreements for recreation activities
- Supporting efforts to increase the use of local foods in institutional food services

The FRCOG was awarded additional MiM funds in September through the CDC's 1422 program. A large part of the funding focuses on chronic disease intervention work through the Community Health Center of Franklin County but there is also a built environment component of the grant. Those tasks include:

- Develop walking resources to encourage walking (maps and

wayfinding signs)

- Complete assessments to identify needed improvements
- Develop a regional mode shift goal
- Work with local Councils on Aging to engage walking champions
- Assist towns to achieve “Complete Streets” program eligibility

S. Lovejoy asked if there will be funding for sidewalks. B. Giannini answered that sidewalks are an eligible expense if they are Complete Streets certified. There is planning technical assistance funding available to help communities complete their Complete Streets Policy and Plan. There will be a Complete Streets informational meeting held at the JWO Transit Center on December 16th at 1 pm. Attendance to one of these meetings is mandatory to be eligible to apply for the planning funds or the construction funds.

J. Schermesser requested that a template of a Complete Street policy be sent out to the FRPB members.

T. Cady stated that invasive plants are an issue that impedes walking in Warwick. B. Giannini stated that eradicating invasive species plants may be an eligible expense. The focus of the grant is on utilitarian walking routes to the grocery store or post office, etc. rather than leisure walking activities.

J. Basford asked about winter activities. B. Giannini replied that there is another part of this grant that Rachel Stoler and Jessica McMillin are working on that is focusing on joint use agreements. This will allow recreational activities to be offered indoors during the winter.

M. Mullaney invited everyone to take one of each of the Scenic Byway posters and Mass in Motion tote bags.

S. Lovejoy thanked M. Mullaney and B. Giannini for their presentations. A round of applause followed.

4 – Presentation on Low Impact Development (LID) Projects in Greenfield to Manage Stormwater: K. MacPhee, FRCOG

K. MacPhee gave a PowerPoint presentation on Low Impact Development projects in Greenfield. Stormwater runoff is the single largest source of pollution in our rivers, streams and lakes. Low Impact Development (LID) is a group of land development and stormwater best management practices (BMPs) that treat stormwater on site using small-scale features and native vegetation. LID can be used to replace or enhance traditional “pipe and pond” stormwater management systems. LID techniques can include:

- Permeable pavement
- Curbless parking lots
- Pervious pavement
- Green roofs

- Tree box filters
- Swales
- Infiltration trenches
- Narrow streets
- Rain gardens

The benefits of using LID practices are:

- Improves water quality
- Reduces flooding
- Can lower construction costs
- Aesthetic value

The Scope of Work (SOW) for the Greenfield Project was to retrofit the Chapman/Davis parking lot and Olive Street with LID components. The FRCOG worked with the Greenfield Planning Department and Greenfield DPW to identify opportunities for incorporating LID into regulations/policies. Public education and outreach is also a part of the SOW. The SOW also called for two demonstration rain gardens. These were installed along the Olive Street bump outs.

Lessons learned from the project consist of:

- Design
 - Professional advice/assistance is helpful
 - Plant density and type
 - Site conditions/constraints
 - Drainage during different storm events
- Maintenance
 - Contractor warranty
 - Watering/weeding
 - Fall/Spring clean ups
 - Volunteers

K. MacPhee stated that the town is looking for businesses or volunteers to adopt these areas to keep up the maintenance. The DPW is also being trained on the maintenance needs.

C. Stevenson asked if there are model bylaws available that emphasize LID practices. K. MacPhee replied that there are model bylaws that she will forward to the FRPB. The term is changing from LID to Green Infrastructure.

J. Schermesser suggested reaching out to organizations and clubs like the Boy Scouts to adopt areas to maintain. N. Hazard stated that AmeriCorps volunteers helped last summer.

S. Lovejoy thanked K. MacPhee for her presentation. A round of applause followed.

5 – Presentation on Increasing Resiliency with Green Infrastructure (Street Tree Inventories for Downtown Greenfield & Turners Falls): M. Praus, FRCOG

M. Praus gave a presentation on increasing the resiliency with green infrastructure. Resiliency is the capacity of an ecological system to withstand changes and stresses while maintaining its ecological functions. M. Praus explained that she conducted a tree inventory on publicly owned land in downtown Greenfield and Turners Falls. The towns will have a tree inventory in case of a disaster. The DPWs are responsible for the maintenance of the trees. There are grants available for purchasing streetscape trees.

The Greenfield Study included 752 trees within the study area. The diameter, height, overall health, obstructions and type were recorded. Well maintained healthy trees can offer aesthetic value but also increased property values and lower cooling costs in the summer. Three quarters of the trees in Greenfield were fifty years old or older. The bigger trees are able to capture rain water which helps filter the water. However, a significant number of the trees are beginning to fail. Over fifty percent of the street trees are Norway maples which do not have a long life span. This is problematic because many will need to be replaced in the same time period.

S. Lovejoy asked about native trees. M. Praus replied that only one third of the trees in the Greenfield study area are native species.

M. Praus reported that 441 trees were assessed in the Turners Fall study. The diversity of trees is more even in Turners Falls.

- 30% other
- 24% Crap Apple
- 24% Norway Maple

The trees in Turners Falls were generally smaller than Greenfield trees. The smaller trees offer less shade, less cooling in the summer and reduced stormwater mitigation capacity. Approximately fifty percent of the trees in Turners Falls are native. Eighty-two percent of the trees are in good condition.

T. Miner commented that there are quite a few trees on the cross streets in Turners Falls and far fewer in Greenfield particularly in the Environmental Justice areas. M. Praus stated that Greenfield has been reluctant to plant trees on the narrow beltway because of the potential hazard to the sidewalks from the root systems. However, the town is open to planting trees on the first twelve feet of lawns. The Greenfield DPW has planted sixty-five trees this year.

P. Sloan stated that towns that are interested in a tree inventory can identify that as an interest on the DLTA project solicitation form.

S. Lovejoy thanked M. Praus for her presentation. A round of applause followed.

5 – Update on the FERC Relicensing of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Facility: T. Miner, CRSEC

T. Miner stated that First Light has filed their formal application for relicensing this week. There are many unfinished studies. S. Lovejoy stated that every kind of project that goes to FERC has a different set of regulations, procedures and timeline.

6 - Update on the Proposed Kinder Morgan/TGP Pipeline Project: P. Sloan, FRCOG

P. Sloan stated that FERC held pre-filing scoping sessions over the summer. The Regional Planning Agency Working Group and the Regional Pipeline Advisory Committee have continued to meet to discuss the project and share information. There are four towns that have contributed funds for special studies and legal assistance. The “Application” was filed by Kinder Morgan on November 20th. FERC has ten business days to decide if the Application meets their minimum requirements. The Application is 20,000+ pages long. If the Application is accepted, any entity seeking intervenor status typically has twenty-one days to apply. Intervenor status will give standing in court to request a re-hearing if an entity wants to appeal a decision by FERC. The FRCOG is planning to file for intervenor status as are most of the eight affected towns. An attorney has been contracted by the FRCOG. She is in Washington DC and has expertise with gas pipeline projects. She will be reviewing the Kinder Morgan Application as well as the FRCOG staff. The FRCOG staff is looking for deficiencies in the Application. Some initial concerns include:

- Lack of clarity on the exact location of the Right-of-Way
- Scoping Session responses were very brief
- Only approximately 40% of the market path pipeline capacity has been subscribed
- Attorney General’s Office study found that electric generating needs do not justify the building of the pipeline

The FRCOG Attorney can review town Intervenor applications and offer comments. P. Sloan stated that FERC should consider capacity commitment percentages in relation to eminent domain proceedings. Discussion followed.

T. Miner stated that he asked a Kinder Morgan representative about the water used to test the pipeline. The representative replied that the test water is retrieved from a nearby water source such as a river and is placed on the ground after it has been used.

T. Cady reported that Kinder Morgan stock dropped by fifty percent and has a substantial amount of debt. Discussion ensued.

**7 –Other Topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours
in advance of the meeting/Adjourn: Jerry Lund, FRPB**

S. Lovejoy stated that he received an email today announcing that P. Sloan was awarded the MA APA Faye Seigfriedt Award for her contributions to the field of planning. A round of applause followed.

J. Gross stated that the Mass Broadband Institute publicly announced that they will not endorse the Wired West Last Mile Plan. P. Sloan stated that she will try to arrange a presentation concerning the last mile at a future meeting. Discussion followed.

T. Miner stated that the FRTA will be dedicating the conference room in Bill Allen's honor. A ceremony with his family will be held later this month. A round of applause followed.

J. Baronas announced that Rodney Hunt, a large manufacturer employer in Orange, announced that they are moving their operations out of this region.

Copies of the handouts are available. Please contact G. Johnson at gjohnson@frcog.org or 413-774-3167 x126.

The next meeting will be held on January 28, 2016. S. Lovejoy wished everyone a Happy Holiday season.

T. Miner MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 p.m. T. Cady SECONDED the motion. The motion was UNANIMOUSLY approved.

Respectfully submitted by:

Tom Miner, Second Vice Chair