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Chapter 1: An Economic Development Roadmap

The purpose of economic development planning is to advance policies, programs, and projects to encourage economic opportunity for all. For our small towns and rural region, economic development creates a supportive environment for residents and businesses to prosper, which can contribute to a municipality’s ability to generate revenue. The 2015 CEDS Plan identified strategies to implement over five years to achieve this vision for Franklin County’s economy. This 2017 Annual Report is the second of four updates to describe changes in economic conditions, report on project implementation, and reflect the region’s evolving needs and opportunities for economic prosperity.

The strategies are grouped in three major categories: people, places and businesses. Some strategies build upon existing success stories and planning, while others seek to create new capabilities. The intended outcome of the Plan is to encourage sustainable job growth and create a more resilient regional economy. The sustainable development theme is expanded upon in the Franklin County Regional Plan for Sustainable Development\(^1\) from 2013.

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

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Chapter 2: The Region

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

Map 1: Greater Franklin County CEDS Region

Source: FRCOG, 2015

Geography
Located in western Massachusetts, greater Franklin County region has a predominantly rural landscape, with over 75% of its acreage in forest and open land\(^2\). The region is known for its scenic rivers and hills, superior Connecticut River valley agricultural soils, and picturesque villages and historic mill towns. These rural communities offer many of the same wonderful attributes found in small towns across New England, such as access to natural and historic amenities and a strong sense of community. These communities are also faced with the similar challenges common to rural areas, such as lower wages, limited job opportunities and difficulty accessing infrastructure and

\(^2\) MassGIS, 2005 Land Use Data Set
services that are available in more urban and suburban environments. Rural communities often have limited capacity and access to resources to move economic development and infrastructure projects forward. Based on these circumstances, two cornerstone approaches for economic development in this CEDS Program are: (1) to leverage the area’s intrinsic and emerging assets to create economic opportunity in a manner that is both sustainable and reflects its inherent character; and (2) to create the capacity needed to take action through collaboration within and outside of the area.

**Cornerstone Approaches to Economic Development**

- To leverage the area’s intrinsic and emerging assets to create economic opportunity in a manner that is both sustainable and reflects its inherent character; and
- To create the capacity needed to take action through collaboration within and outside of the area.

**Transportation & Infrastructure**

The region is easily accessible via two of the state’s primary transportation routes, Interstate-91 and Route 2. Within the region, there are two public use airports, including the Orange Municipal Airport which can accommodate large aircraft. There is an extensive freight rail network which can be accessed at the East Deerfield Railyard. A recent addition to the transportation network is the Greenfield stop for the Amtrak Vermonter passenger rail service that extends from northern Vermont to New York City and Washington DC. The establishment of this new scheduled service in 2015 marked the return of passenger rail to the county for the first time in over twenty-five years.

A comprehensive review of the region’s transportation network and plans for the future will be included in the 2015 Franklin County Long-Range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which is produced by FRCOG’s Transportation Planning Program. The RTP describes the road, bridge, rail, airport, bicycle & pedestrian and transit systems, and also reviews proposed projects and recommendations to improve the way people and goods move around the region. Among the goals in the RTP are to maintain the infrastructure, improve safety and security, increase transportation options, and promote the economic development of the region while maintaining its rural character.

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3 FRCOG Transportation Planning Program, [www.frcog.org/program-services/transportation-planning/](http://www.frcog.org/program-services/transportation-planning/)
Like the transportation network and the electrical grid, broadband infrastructure impacts every aspect of life, business, and community. Access is essential for K-12 education and higher learning, researching and applying for job opportunities, conducting day-to-day business activities, being engaged in civic issues, ensuring public safety communication, using health service applications, and more. For our region’s residents innovations in technology and increasing reliance on conducting business online, demonstrate the assumption of broadband access.

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

The CEDS Region, like other areas of western Massachusetts, has both significant assets and gaps in this important network. The following text reviews both the opportunity and the challenge being faced by the current broadband infrastructure landscape in the region.

MassBroadband 123 is an open access, fiber-optic, “middle mile” network that connects 120 cities/towns in western and north-central Massachusetts to the global telecom network. The network was completed in 2014 using over $90 million of state

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5 For more information about MassBroadband123, go to www.broadband.masstech.org.
and federal funds. The network is owned by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute, a division of the quasi-state agency, the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, and is managed by a division of the private telecom firm, Axia NGNetworks. Multiple internet service providers (ISPs) can use this network to offer services to Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs) that have direct fiber connections to MassBroadband 123 or to entities that procure a connection from Axia NGNetworks. The capacity of this network allows for very high speed transmissions and the use of next-generation applications. It is also the backbone infrastructure necessary to connect the “last mile” (the local system that connects subscriber homes and businesses) to the global network.

**Map 2: MassBroadband123 Fiber-Optic Network**

![Map of MassBroadband123](http://broadband.masstech.org/news-and-updates/map-gallery/massbroadband-123-maps-data)

While the region has a next generation middle mile network, there remain communities that do not have broadband access at the local level. Efforts at the state and community level are underway to address this lack of broadband access at the last mile for residents and businesses. In 2014, the State committed $40 million to invest in last mile infrastructure in unserved communities. Many communities are exploring fiber-to-the-premise (FTTP) last mile networks; while other communities are considering wireless or hybrid fiber-wireless systems. Given the cost of last mile networks, it is anticipated that most communities will require a local contribution as well as State resources to fund the creation of these systems.
Of the 29 municipalities in the CEDS Region, only 16 have access to a cable TV broadband system, which is the most common technology for accessing broadband services. It should be noted that communities with cable systems may also have gaps in their service area, creating pockets of unserved areas. Of the 13 towns in Franklin County without cable systems, nine towns have DSL available within a finite area, and four towns have no access to DSL or cable modem broadband. The Town of Warwick, which does not have DSL or cable access, constructed its own wireless broadband network for residents in 2008. The Town of Leverett constructed its own community fiber-to-the-home network, which became fully operational in 2015.

Map 3: Wireline Broadband Availability Map

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

Demographics
The U.S. Census Bureau\(^6\) estimated that Franklin County had a population of 71,144 in its 724 square miles, while the CEDS Region was estimated to have a total population of 123,985 in its 810 square miles. In terms of population density, Franklin County was approximately 98 people per square mile, and the CEDS Region was 153 people per square mile. To put these densities in perspective to its southern neighbors, Franklin County has almost the same population as Amherst, Hadley and Northampton combined, in a land area over eight times their size. Using U.S. Census Bureau decennial figures, as in Figure 1, the population peak for Franklin County was in 2000 and the peak for the CEDS Region was 2010.

Figure 1: Total Population and Population Projections

Map 1 depicts estimated population change at the county-level since 2010 for the State and nearby New Hampshire and Vermont counties. It appears that most population increases are happening in metropolitan counties, while the rural counties are declining.

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Map 4: Recent Population Change in Massachusetts’ and Surrounding Counties

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau’s 2000 Census Population and 2016 Population Estimate

Adjusted population projections created by the University of Massachusetts’ Donahue Institute (UMDI) and released in 2015, forecast that Franklin County’s total population will decline by 1% or a loss of over 800 people over the next twenty-five years (see Figure 1.). These projections are created using past county trends at that time and general demographic patterns, and do not take into consideration specific projects in individual communities that could influence population growth. As a result, these projections indicate what could happen to the population level in the region, if actions are not taken to change this outcome.

It has been reported that a major contributor to population growth in Massachusetts is international migration. As seen on Map 1, areas not experiencing population growth are rural counties, like Berkshire and Franklin. According to ACS 2011-2015 Five-Year Estimates, the percent of the population foreign-born was 5% in Franklin County and 6% in Berkshire County, compared to 15% and 13% for the state and nation.

A review of how the population is distributed among age groups demonstrates that Franklin County’s population skews much older than the total CEDS Region, state and nation. Since the CEDS Region includes the college-town of Amherst, it has a disproportionately high percentage of residents aged 20-24 years old, in comparison. When considering the population and its relationship to the labor force, Franklin County has a larger proportion of its population in the 45-64 years old age cohort, reflecting an older overall workforce. In fact, half of the population is 45 years of age or older in
Franklin County, while this figure is 43% and 40% respectively for the state and nation. As these workers prepare to retire in the coming years, a supply of younger workers is needed to take their place. At the same time, some of the school systems in the more rural areas of the county are challenged by declining school enrollment due to fewer 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.

Figure 2: Population Age Group Distribution

Franklin County and the CEDS Region is significantly less racially and ethnically diverse than the state or nation. According to the ACS 2011-2015 Five-Year Estimates, 6% of Franklin County and 11% of the CEDS Region population identified themselves as being non-white or multi-racial, compared to the 20.0% for the state and 26% for the nation. The percent of residents who identified themselves as of Hispanic or Latino origin ethnicity for Franklin County was 4% and the CEDS Region was 5%, compared to 11% for the state and 17% for the nation.

In terms of educational attainment for the population 25 years of age and older, only 8% of Franklin County residents and CEDS Region residents do not have a high school or equivalent diploma, compared to 10% for the state and 13% for the nation. The State has a high percentage of the population (40%) with at least a Bachelor’s or Graduate or professional degree compared to the nation (20%). Franklin County (35%) and the CEDS Region (38%) share this characteristic of a high level of educational attainment for its population age 25 and over.
Labor Force & Employment
The labor force is defined as the pool of individuals 16 years of age and over, who are either employed or actively seeking employment. Persons not actively seeking employment, such as enrolled students, retirees or stay-at-home parents, are excluded from the labor force. The unemployment rate describes the percentage of people in the labor force presently not employed, but are actively seeking employment in a given time period. In 2016, the unemployment rate for Franklin County was 3.3% and the CEDS Region was 3.6%, which was lower than state (3.7%) and national (4.9%) rates. The 2016 unemployment rates for the county, CEDS Region and state are over 1% lower than their 2015 unemployment rates. These 2016 unemployment rates are the lowest rate each geographic area has experienced since before the great recession began.

From year to year, the size of the labor force and the total number of employed will fluctuate in the county and CEDS Region. Overall, the size of the labor force in Franklin County decreased from 2006 through 2009, as did the number of employed. Decreases in the labor force may be attributed to people moving out of the area or people in the area no longer actively seeking employment, due to the factors mentioned previously like retirement, enrolling in school or becoming stay-at-home parents. Another factor for declines in the labor force are people who have not found employment, become discouraged and are no longer actively pursuing employment.

The particularly low employment levels and decreases in the labor force from 2009 through 2012 is attributed to the economic recession the nation experienced from late 2007 through mid-2009 which was followed by a slow recovery period. By 2014, both the total number of employed began to increase in Franklin County and the unemployment rate continued to decrease. For the CEDS Region, the increase in the labor force during the post-recession recovery period was attributed mostly to increases in Amherst.

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

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Figure 3: Franklin County Labor Force and Employment Level


Figure 4: CEDS Region Labor Force & Employment Level

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

Past studies have demonstrated the large role the non-profit sector plays in the state. A 2005 study noted that the Massachusetts non-profit sector was among the largest in the nation, and has a highly skilled workforce.\(^8\) Two of the industries with the greatest number of employees in the region are healthcare & social assistance services and education services, which frequently are also private non-profit organizations, such as hospitals, social service agencies, and independent schools.

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

Rural areas in general are recognized as having a higher percentage of self-employed workers either out of necessity (due to not finding employment) or out of opportunity\(^9\). Access to business assistance and financing is important for helping self-employed people or people who want to be self-employed with launching new ventures. As advances in access to broadband are made and village centers are revitalized, this can encourage more residents to be self-employed or attract self employed people to locate here.

**Income & Wages**

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

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

![Figure 6: Median and Per Capita Income Levels](image)


While the previous data describes the incomes of people who live in this region, the following data describes the wages paid to people who work at jobs located in the region (regardless of where they may live). Average earnings per job data are available

from the federal Bureau of Economic Analysis. As the title indicates, it is the total amount of annual wages earned in a geographic area divided by the number of jobs in that area. As of 2015, the average earnings per job in Franklin County was $42,383, compared to the state’s $70,535 and nation’s $58,228. Franklin County has consistently had a lower average wage per job than both the state and nation. In comparison to the other fourteen counties in Massachusetts, Franklin County has had the lowest average earnings per job for the last ten years.

**Figure 7: Average Earnings Per Job in 2015 for Massachusetts Counties**

![Bar chart showing average earnings per job in 2015 for Massachusetts counties.](chart)

Source: U.S. Commerce Department, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Economic Profile, November 2016

Living wage calculators estimate the hourly wage needed to support the monthly expenses of an individual or family. Dr. Amy K. Glasmeier of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has created a county-level living wage calculator. ¹⁰ This calculator estimates that for a Franklin County adult to support himself/herself, a living wage would be $11.02 per hour. For a family of two working adults with two children, the calculator estimates a living wage of $15.48 per hour for each adult. For a single parent household with two children, it estimates $28.44 per hour as the living wage to support the family. In comparison, the current minimum wage in Massachusetts is $11.00 per hour, which went into effect on January 1, 2017.

Key Industries & Clusters
The key industries identified in the 2015 CEDS Plan are sectors that employ a large number of people, and whose significant job gains or losses could impact the overall economic health of the region. County Business Patterns provides employment data by industry for private-sector firms with five or more employees\(^{11}\) located in that geographic area. Specifically, this data is describing the private-sector jobs located in Franklin County, regardless of where the employee lives. According to this data set, there were 20,104 employees in Franklin County in 2015, a 2.5% increase from the previous year. This level of private-sector establishment employment is the highest since 2010, but not to the pre-recession level of employment of over 22,000 in 2008. According to this data, there were 1,582 establishments, three more establishments than the previous year. The total annual payroll for 2015 for these establishments was over $812 million, a 6% increase from the previous year. The increases in total employment and annual payroll for Franklin County were consistent with the experience at the statewide and national level.

Table 1: Top Private-Sector Industries by Employment, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry*</th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>Massachusetts</th>
<th>United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Employed</td>
<td>% of Total Employed</td>
<td>Average Payroll per Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>3,640 (↓)</td>
<td>18.1% (↓)</td>
<td>$54,020 (↑)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare &amp; Social Assistance</td>
<td>3,311 (↓)</td>
<td>16.5% (↓)</td>
<td>$37,752 (↑)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>3,052 (↑)</td>
<td>15.2% (↑)</td>
<td>$27,967 (↑)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodations &amp; Food Services</td>
<td>2,067 (↑)</td>
<td>10.3% (↑)</td>
<td>$15,496 (↑)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Services</td>
<td>1,381 (↑)</td>
<td>6.9% (↑)</td>
<td>$44,398 (↑)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, County Business Patterns, 2015

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

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

- (↑) = Increase from previous year
- (↓) = Decrease from previous year
- (↔) = No change from previous year

\(^{11}\) County Business Pattern data excludes public-sector/government and self-employed workers (which are also large components of this region’s economy as seen from the Class of Worker data), www.census.gov/econ/cbp/index.html
According to 2015 County Business Patterns, the private-sector industry in Franklin County that employed the largest number of people was Manufacturing, 18.1% of the total employment in this data set. This percentage of manufacturing employment is over 2.5 times the state rate and almost twice the national rate. While the number employed in manufacturing in 2015 is significantly less than it was ten years ago, there are signs of strength. According to this data source, the portion of employment in Manufacturing has consistently been over 18% of the total employment. In addition, Franklin County’s proportion of Manufacturing employment is consistently greater than the other 12 counties in Massachusetts that have data available. According to annual payroll information associated with this data set, the Manufacturing industry has among the highest average pay per employee ($54,020) of the sixteen industries with information available for Franklin County. The annual payroll amount has increased each year, even as the number of establishments and employment levels fluctuated. From 2012 to 2015, the number of establishments increased by seven firms, the number of employees increased by 108 workers, and the annual payroll increased by $40 million. This annual payroll figure indicates that there are increases in wages being offered across the industry, and not just the result of more employees in the sector.

**Figure 8: Franklin County Manufacturing Industry Employment**

*Data source only includes private-sector establishments with five or more employees, and as a result does not include government or self-employed workers. Also, please note that NAICS definitions for manufacturing and other industries were revised in 2007 and 2012.*

The Health Care & Social Assistance industry includes employers, such as hospitals, doctors’ offices, non-profit human services organizations, and elder care facilities. This industry offers a range of job opportunities and pathways to grow within the industry. Trends indicate this industry will continue to grow as the population ages, requiring greater services.

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

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

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

Using this information and comparing it to land use data, it is estimated that about 21% of the land area in Franklin County was in agriculture in 2012. While there were increases in the number of and land in farms, the average size of farms decreased during this period from 127 acres to 115 acres. While the total number of acres in farms increased during this time, the total acres of cropland in farms decreased. The growth of land in farms was due to increased acreage for pastureland, woodland, and land used for house lots, ponds, roads, etc. More information about this sector is expanded upon in the FRCOG’s Franklin County Farm and Food System Project report.

The U.S. Census Bureau produces statistics for non-employer establishments, which is a firm that has no paid employees and annual business receipts of $1,000 or more. Most of these establishments are self-employed individuals. In 2014, there were 6,081 non-employer establishments that had total annual receipts of over $224 million. In comparison to the same year’s County Business Pattern data for private-sector employers, there were 1,579 establishments with total annual payroll of $765 million in

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12 Land in farms includes cropland, woodland, pastureland/rangeland as well as house lots, ponds, roads.
13 This estimate was determined by dividing the total number acres of land in farms according to the 2007 Census of Agriculture (79,465 acres), into the total number of acres (not including water) in Franklin County (425,671 acres).
The industries with the greatest number of non-employer establishments are: Professional, scientific & technical services (17%); Construction (13%); Other Services (12%); Arts, entertainment & recreation (11%); and Health care and social assistance (10%). In the past decade, the number of non-employer establishments has fluctuated by 5%, with the peak of 6,224 in 2009 and the low of 5,922 in 2013.

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

**Table 2: CEDS Region Major Employers**

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

Source: MA Department of Workforce Development, Infogroup 2017

A large scale layoff or closure of an employer has an obvious direct impact to the dislocated workers and can also have indirect effect to related businesses or the level of general economic activity in the region. As seen with the discontinuing of energy generation activities and decommissioning of the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Facility in Vernon, VT. The loss of over 600 jobs direct jobs in the next five years is anticipated to have a rippling effect. Rodney Hunt, a manufacturer of water control devices, closed in 2016 resulting in the loss of over 200 jobs in Orange. This facility’s closure leaves a 37-acre site with over 234,000 square feet of industrial space in the

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Downtown. A site this size and with specific use buildings, such as a foundry, may be challenging to redevelop. It should be noted that other manufacturers in the region have benefited from hiring some of these skilled employees. However, the overall impact of this closure has a rippling effect for the North Quabbin area.

The EDA encourages economic development strategies that seek to grow specific “clusters” in a region. Clusters are defined by Professor Michael E. Porter of the Harvard Business School’s Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness\textsuperscript{16}, as geographic concentrations of interconnected industries and supportive organizations that make regions uniquely competitive for jobs and private investment. A cluster may include businesses from different industry sectors. For example the “Agribusiness, Food Processing & Technology” cluster includes farms, food manufacturers as well as retail trade and service operations that specifically serve this cluster. The cluster economic development strategy is intended to be region-driven with each region leveraging its own unique competitive advantages. The premise is that a successful cluster will generate job growth and economic activity in the region where it is implemented, while also contributing to a stronger, more diversified national economy.

The EDA has funded two online tools to provide region’s with data to help them improve their economic competitiveness by understanding their clusters in relation to the relative strengths of national clusters. As found on StatsAmerica.org, the Industry Clusters\textsuperscript{17} browser provides employment, establishment and wage data on a per county basis for 17 defined clusters (including six manufacturing sub-clusters).

In addition to total figures, it provides the location quotient of a cluster, which demonstrates the concentration of employment in that cluster in comparison to the national average. For example, an LQ of over 1.0 indicates a higher than national average concentration in a specific cluster. A high employment concentration in a particular cluster can attract new businesses that want to find skilled labor in that field or may encourage a new start up to fill a niche within that cluster.

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

\textsuperscript{16} For more information: www.isc.hbs.edu/competitiveness-economic-development/frameworks-and-key-concepts/Pages/clusters.aspx
\textsuperscript{17} Innovation in America Regions project, by the Purdue Center for Regional Development at Indiana University. www.statsamerica.org/innovation/anydata
Table 3: Clusters with Highest Employment Location Quotient

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

Source: University of Indiana’s Purdue Center for Regional Development, Innovation Data Browser, 2012

Another EDA funded online tool, called the U.S. Cluster Mapping Project\(^\text{18}\), has created 51 definitions for “traded” clusters (serves markets outside of the region) and 16 definitions for “local” cluster (primarily only serves the local market), and measures their strength in comparison to other areas across the country. This online tool uses data from the U.S. County Business Patterns and other sources, which is updated annually with the most recent figures available. Using 2014 industry data, it has determined that 8,676 were workers employed in traded clusters and 13,898 employed in local clusters. Using 2014 industry data, the tables below identifies the top traded clusters and local clusters by employment in Franklin County.

Table 4: Top Local Clusters with Highest Employment Level, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Cluster</th>
<th>Franklin County Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Health Services</td>
<td>2,845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Hospitality Establishments</td>
<td>2,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Education and Training</td>
<td>1,335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Real Estate, Construction, and Development</td>
<td>1,294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Food and Beverage Processing and Distribution</td>
<td>1,071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Motor Vehicle Products and Services</td>
<td>899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Community and Civic Organizations</td>
<td>886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Commercial Services</td>
<td>623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Logistical Services</td>
<td>563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Retailing of Clothing and General Merchandise</td>
<td>468</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Cluster Mapping, Traded Clusters, April 2017

\(^{18}\) U.S. Cluster Mapping Project: www.clustermapping.us
Table 5: Top Traded Clusters with Highest Employment Level, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traded Cluster</th>
<th>Franklin County Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distribution and Electronic Commerce</td>
<td>1,190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Services</td>
<td>1,128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastics</td>
<td>1,045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational and Small Electric Goods</td>
<td>820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality and Tourism</td>
<td>578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Technology and Heavy Machinery</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Processing and Manufacturing</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upstream Metal Manufacturing</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper and Packaging</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing, Design, and Publishing</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Cluster Mapping, Traded Clusters, April 2017

It should be noted that the title of some of the clusters may not effectively describe how this cluster is relevant to Franklin County. For example, the Recreational & Small Electric Goods cluster is described as including 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 may include candle production, local artists, as well as businesses that create office supplies.

For this same period, the U.S. Cluster Mapping tool identified 6 traded clusters in Franklin County that they have been evaluated to be strong due to high employment specialization in comparison to other counties across the country. Again these are not clusters with the greatest number of employees, but are traded clusters that have been evaluated to be particularly strong according to their criteria. However, in some cases, a strong cluster may also be a top employment cluster as well, such as with the Plastics cluster. The cluster identified as the highest ranked in comparison to other counties across the nation, (i.e. ranked #39 out of 3,221 counties) is the Recreational & Small Electric Goods cluster. Other Massachusetts counties that are strong in this sector are Bristol, Norfolk, and Middlesex counties. See Figure 9 for a graphic of the Franklin County traded clusters identified as strong.

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19 U.S. Cluster Mapping Project, Cluster by Cluster Definitions (Traded), June 2014, www.clustermapping.us
Figure 9: Strong Traded Clusters in 2014 in Franklin County

These online tools provide a useful perspective on the clusters found in this region and how they compare to other regions or the nation. Each of these online tools defines clusters differently, and in some ways differently than how the CEDS Region may have defined them. For example, the Agribusiness & Food Processing cluster (as was defined in the StatsAmerica.org Industry Clusters browser) has been functioning in the region for many years and is recognized for its continued growth potential. The data provided by the online tools bolsters this local understanding by identifying it with a high location quotient and evaluating it as a “strong” cluster. Conversely, a cluster that is recognized in the Franklin County region, but not defined in these online tools, is the adventure & outdoor recreation services cluster. As a result, the information provided by these online tools offers useful information and a data-driven perspective, but do not exclusively determine the clusters to be the focus of CEDS Plan strategies.

Chapter 4 of the 2015 CEDS Plan identified strategies and action items to improve the regional economy. Most of these strategies are applicable to a broad range of industries and clusters found in this region. However, special attention is also made to key industries and clusters that have unique assets or advantages in this region, have the potential to create job opportunities, and are in keeping with the vision of the 2015 CEDS Plan. Information from federal data sources and online cluster tools was combined with local knowledge to identify six of these key industries and clusters for special attention. It is anticipated that as the CEDS Plan is updated annually, this list may evolve to reflect new opportunities and changes in market conditions.
Table 6: CEDS Plan Key Industries & Clusters

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

Source: FRCOG, 2016

Chapter 4 highlights projects and activities that will create conditions to support key clusters, such as the creative economy; forest, farm and food production; manufacturing; and tourism. In addition to those specified in the 2015 CEDS Plan’s strategies, other projects and activities are happening in the region related to these key clusters. For example, through a successful EDA grant award, the Southern Vermont Economic Development Strategy (SeVEDS) forwarded a cluster development project supporting the Green Economy, and in particular the green building and construction cluster. Called the Ecovation Hub, the project is seeking to make the greater tri-state region a center of excellent for green building and construction. This effort incorporates developing new business sector opportunities, promoting research and development, and inventorying educational resources, programs, sites and other assets that support the cluster.

Another significant development in this CEDS Program year is the announcement of Thomas Aquinas College and the Moody Center opening at the former Northfield campus. Based in California, the College anticipates opening its New England campus to students in fall 2018. The College anticipates growing its enrollment over time to 400 students. The Moody Center will house museum, educational and event spaces on a portion of the former campus. The campus has been vacant since 2005, when the Northfield Mount Hermon school consolidated on to their Gill campus.

20 Thomas Aquinas College website, https://thomasaquinas.edu/news/college-signs-agreement-open-new-england-campus
There are also significant changes happening at the state level which may impact key industries and cluster of the CEDS Region. In 2011, Governor Deval Patrick signed a law to allow casino development in select locations of the Commonwealth. For the western region, the $950 million MGM Springfield casino is being constructed on 14 acres in the south end of downtown Springfield. The project is anticipated to be complete in 2018. According to the Mass Gaming Commission, the casino will have 125,000 square feet of gaming space, a 250-room hotel, multi-level parking structure and over 138,000 square feet of restaurant, retail and movie theater space.[1] The project is estimated to generate 2,000 construction jobs and 3,000 new jobs once in operation.

Due in part to the casino development, additional investments in Downtown Springfield is underway or have been announced, such as the redevelopment of historic Court Square for market rate housing. At the same time, the rehabilitation of the historic Union Station for train and bus services is scheduled to be complete and open to the public for first time in decades by the end of June 2017. The scale of impact of these developments on businesses and the workforce throughout the Pioneer Valley and Franklin County are yet to be determined. Potential economic impacts to key clusters could range from drawing more tourists to the region who may visit other attractions, to creating more business opportunities for vendors to sell goods and services at an institutional scale.

Another state level change was the 2013 legalization of medical use of marijuana, which allows for the establishment of cultivation facilities and dispensaries. A more recent ballot initiative in 2016, legalized some recreational use of marijuana. The rules governing the siting of cultivation and retail facilities at the local level are still being determined. The potential economic development impacts of these laws to the CEDS Region are unknown at this time.

**Economic Resilience**

The EDA describes economic resilience in terms of economic development and includes: the ability to recover quickly from a shock, the ability to withstand a shock, and the ability to avoid the shock altogether.21 As stated by the EDA, a region’s economic prosperity is linked to its ability be economically resilient.

Fortunately, there is an active and robust community of people and organizations working on emergency preparedness and disaster resiliency in the region, such as the FRCOG Emergency Preparedness Program and the Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council (WRHSAC). The FRCOG Emergency Preparedness Program

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works with committees and local governments on public health, emergency management, communication systems, and volunteer training for emergency response. WRHSAC has implemented an impressive range of projects and initiatives for planning and preparedness for emergencies and to support first responders and emergency personnel across western Massachusetts. This work requires significant outreach and the creation of informational materials, including the WesternMassReady.org website. Efforts are underway to better engage the business community to be prepared and participate in this system of emergency management (see Goal 7).

Considerable work has been done to assess and mitigate hazard risks at the municipal and regional level, such as through town hazard mitigation plans. Possible disasters that could impact this area include flooding, severe winter weather, extreme heat, power outages, terrorism, earthquakes, emerging disease and pandemics, hazardous materials, forest fires, and tornadoes and high winds. Experience from the devastating flooding of Tropical Storm Irene in 2011 provided additional insight into what could be done to improve response and recovery. As a result of this work, action steps and resources have been prepared to effectively protect the health and safety of residents, emergency personnel and others in case of any of these events.

In addition, a regional cooperative framework has been developed to forward disaster resilient, community-based initiatives and projects. This framework has participation by the Franklin County Conservation District, the FRCOG, watershed associations, municipalities, and other stakeholders. One such project is the FRCOG’s Deerfield Watershed Resiliency Project, which has received funding from MassDEP. The project is developing a comprehensive plan that characterizes the watershed conditions and includes specific, measurable actions to protect the watershed’s green infrastructure and improve climate change resiliency.

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

In addition to specific risks, the EDA recommends economic development planners evaluate their region’s resilience by measuring how evenly income is distributed across the population and the degree to which economic activity is spread across sectors. The premise is that a diversified economy will better withstand economic shocks. The University of California Berkeley’s Institute of Governmental Studies has an online tool called the Resilience Capacity Index (RCI) which summarizes a region’s status based on multiple factors that “influence the ability of a region to bounce back from a future

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unknown stress.” This Index takes into consideration how a region’s income is distributed and the diversity of economic activity, among other factors. The Index score indicates how well a metropolitan area might respond to a future stress. A ranking of VERY HIGH or HIGH indicates a higher capacity of being resilient, and that “the region has factors and conditions thought to position a region well for effective post-stress resilience performance”, according to the Building Resilient Regions website. Whereas a ranking of VERY LOW or LOW indicates “the region lacks factors and conditions thought to position a region well for effective post-stress resilience performance.”

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

**Map 5: Resilience Capacity Index (RCI) Map of Metropolitan Regions**

![Map of Metropolitan Regions](image)

Source: University of California Berkeley’s Institute of Governmental Studies – Building Resilient Regions, 2016,

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

24 The RCI rankings of the 351 metropolitan areas in the country range from 1 for Very High to 351 for Very Low.
Chapter 3: SWOT Analysis

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis evaluates advantageous and disadvantageous factors that come from within or from outside the region and that can influence economic development in the region. The SWOT analysis in the 2015 CEDS Plan was compiled using a variety of inputs from the CEDS Committee, one-on-one CEDS Program partner interviews, and a review of relevant documents including the 2013 Franklin County Regional Plan for Sustainable Development, which had involved an extensive public participation process. Since the 2015 CEDS Plan, the SWOT was revisited by the CEDS Committee and updated.

Sunderland Village Center

View from Mt. Sugarloaf of the Connecticut River and the historic Sunderland village center.

Photo credit: FRCOG, 2015
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths (Region’s competitive advantages)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proximity and access to major markets via Interstate 91 and Route 2, and freight and passenger rail network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of two general aviation airports in the region, and reasonable proximity to international airports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of MassBroadband123 middle-mile fiber network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic rural landscape and abundant natural resources, including farmland and forestland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of outdoor recreation assets and attractions, including unique resources such as the scheduled releases of water by dams along the Deerfield River to create whitewater conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High educational attainment level for the population 25 years and over, and access to respected higher education institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of independent schools and colleges in the area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth in highly skilled manufacturing employment opportunities in the region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong manufacturing clusters in plastics, machining, and advanced materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful skills training programs established for manufacturing, healthcare, and renewable energy/energy efficiency industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong organizational assets in renewable energy and energy efficiency industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to entrepreneurial and small business development assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active and engaged agricultural and food system community, including access to the Western Mass. Food Processing Center in Greenfield and to PV Grows (a network of individuals and entities supporting this cluster)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong interest in “buy local” efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of new community-financed lending programs for businesses, such as the PVGrows Investment and the Community First Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic and cultural attractions, and acclaimed arts and culture community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Founding of young professionals group in region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local governments and regional organizations’ ability to work collaboratively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robust and integrated emergency preparedness and first responder community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An established regional cooperative framework that successfully forwards disaster resilient, community-based initiatives and projects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8: Weaknesses for Economic and Community Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weaknesses (Region’s relative competitive disadvantages)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Recent demographic trends factor into projections that predict a decline in the population in the near future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Older overall population, resulting in a large segment of the workforce and of business owners approaching retirement age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Lower average wage per job than compared to other regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Need for more job opportunities, and job opportunities that pay a competitive, living wage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Lower percent of residents working in private wage, for-profit enterprises, than compared to state and nation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Many areas without last mile broadband availability, which greatly restricts access to economic, educational and civic engagement opportunities and impacts real estate values and the ability to attract and retain residents and businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Areas in region with limited cell phone service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Low inventory of developable industrial land in center of region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ High transportation costs and limited access to public transit services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ High cost to redevelop historic downtown structures and historic mill buildings, which cannot be recouped by current real estate rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Village centers with limited or no access to public water and/or sewer systems, which is limiting commercial enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Limited available capacity and resources for municipalities to pursue economic development projects and invest in infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Limited employment opportunities for youth and young adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Limited availability of affordable, quality child care and early education services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Shortage of housing affordable to households with middle incomes and very low incomes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9: Opportunities for Economic and Community Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>(Potential positive impacts from outside the region)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to higher educational institutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of former Northfield Campus for redevelopment as an academic institution or similar campus use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connections to industries and resources that broaden business development eco-system, such as Valley Venture Mentors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth of regional networks that are enhancing food systems and the creative economy, such as PV Grows and the PV Creative Economy Network</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MassBroadband 123 fiber network and state funds committed to invest in last mile infrastructure in unserved areas in western Massachusetts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in enhancing passenger rail services along the Knowledge Corridor/Connecticut River Main Line corridor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative resiliency of small business sector, as demonstrated in the Pioneer Valley Growth Small Business Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength of non-profit sector and Education &amp; Knowledge Creation cluster in Massachusetts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State and U.S. Forest Service interest in a partnership to create a new model to conserve forestland and promote sustainable economic development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion of Green Economy Cluster Development Initiative to greater Franklin County region</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening of inter-regional collaborations, such as the Tri-State Region efforts with southeastern Vermont and southwestern New Hampshire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10: Threats for Economic and Community Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threats (Potential negative impacts from outside the region)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Given the difference in the economies of scale to implement programs and projects in rural areas, as opposed to more urban or suburban areas, the region is often at a disadvantage when applying for and executing state and federal programs that do not take rural challenges into consideration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Challenge to maintain funding for programs, such as career education and school-to-youth programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Uncertainty of public funding levels that may impact services, infrastructure investment and high employment in government and non-profit sectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- External ownership of existing major employers or threat of external ownership as business owners retire and their firms are acquired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Challenge to attract and retain young professionals and young families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lack of understanding of manufacturing career opportunities and limited availability of skilled workforce to fill advanced manufacturing jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Limited recognition of Franklin County as a destination for business and tourism, in comparison to other regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Loss of jobs and economic activity due to decommissioning of Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- More frequent severe weather events and their impacts to regional assets and economic activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who’s Who? An Acronym Guide

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

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

As part of the development of the 2015 CEDS Plan, a strategic review of findings of the SWOT analysis was undertaken to identify the major factors that impact economic and community development in the region, and how strategies may be implemented to leverage these advantages and mitigate the disadvantages.

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

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

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

**PEOPLE, PLACES, BUSINESS**

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

This category addresses issues of capacity and the ability for individuals and organizations to make the most of existing resources and potential opportunities.

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

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

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

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

- **Lead and Partners:** FHREB, FHCC GCC, FCTS, and regional employers

- **Products/Outcomes:** Increase the number of training graduates and maintain a high success rate for job placement and job retention

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Update: As of May 2017, the MSMI program had its 100\textsuperscript{th} graduate over the course of seven class cohorts completed within the past four years. The average cohort rate of graduation is 96\% and the job placement rate is 84\%.\textsuperscript{26} The average starting wage of employed graduates is $15.39/hour. The current U.S. Department of Labor grant has been extended through June 2018. However, additional resources are being sought from public and private sources to continue the program at its current level.

B. Assess and expand \textbf{credential offerings or reskilling programs} that are sector specific.

- \textit{Actions}: The GCC Workforce Development Office will assess industry needs and implement programs to provide trainings that are sector specific or customized to specific businesses.
- \textit{Lead and Partners}: GCC, FHREB, FHCC
- \textit{Products/Outcomes}: Creation of new certificate or expanded programing offerings implemented
- \textit{Update}: As of Spring Semester 2017, GCC offers 22 certificate programs and 14 Associate Degrees. For the Liberal Arts Associates Degree, they offer 20 different options for areas of study. Recently launched programs include: Corrections Certificate, Athletic Facility Administration Certificate, Addiction Studies Certificate, and Engineering Technology Certificate.

C. Explore how the \textbf{literacy level} of the workforce may be improved.

- \textit{Actions}: Coordinate education and workforce development leaders to develop strategies for how to assist youth and adults with job readiness and improved literacy skills.
- \textit{Lead and Partners}: K-12 public schools, FHREB, The Literacy Project, Community Action of Franklin, Hampshire and North Quabbin Regions
- \textit{Products/Outcomes}: Partner participation to develop strategies.
- \textit{Update}: The FHREB has pursued with partners a variety of strategies to assist youth and adults with job readiness and improved literacy skills. The FHREB’s School to Career program works with schools county-wide to incorporate career

\textsuperscript{26} FHREB, \url{http://franklinhampshirereb.org/}
development activities and connect students to jobs governed by a work-based learning plan. Over 183 Franklin County youth have been tracked on work-based learning plans in FY17.

In addition, the FHREB’s current federal Summer Jobs & Beyond project is helping two high-need Franklin County schools, Ralph C. Mahar Regional High School and Turners Falls High School, to develop a comprehensive continuum of career development opportunities and offer specific training opportunities to youth, (e.g. OSHA, ServSafe, CPR/First Aid).

State and federal workforce grants secured by the FHREB in recent years have included sub-contracts for Adult Basic Education (ABE) Partners to develop “bridge” curricula in priority industry areas. Past efforts have focused on green jobs and science, technology, engineering and math. Current efforts on healthcare and manufacturing are underway. At least a dozen ABE students in the past year have made a successful transition to postsecondary education and/or training as a result.

The FHREB along with its Hampden County counterpart is facilitating a Workforce Development Regional Planning initiative launched by the Governor’s Workforce Skills Cabinet for the three-county Pioneer Valley region. With the assistance of secondary school, higher education, and economic development representatives, the initiative is using updated labor market information to produce a “Pioneer Valley Workforce Blueprint” by January 2018. The Blueprint will include the role partners have in improving the workplace literacy, career awareness and job readiness of youth and adult learners.

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**Labor Market Blueprint**

As the Workforce Investment Area board for Franklin and Hampshire Counties and the North Quabbin area, the FHREB will use the Blueprint to guide their goals and prioritize initiatives to assist both job seekers and employers.
2. Build collaborations within the region to enhance capacity and better support economic and business development opportunities.

Established intra-regional networks, such as the CEDS Program and the Franklin Regional Economic Development Initiative (FREDI), allow for communities, organizations and individuals to engage on important issues. These collaborations are essential to achieving the goals of the 2015 CEDS Plan. More recent formal and informal collaborations of organizations that support businesses and business growth have experienced successful outcomes through cooperation. However, additional capacity is needed to maintain and broaden these relationships.

A. Facilitate and enhance the ability of community and regional leaders to engage in regional economic development networks.

- **Actions**: Promote engagement and coordinate meetings of the CEDS Committee and FREDI to further important projects, policies and programs to meet the mission and vision of the 2015 CEDS Plan
- **Lead and Partners**: FRCOG, CEDS Committee members and organizational partners, FREDI members
- **Products/Outcomes**: CEDS meetings coordinated and strong participation; FREDI partners participating as lead implementers
- **Update**: Of the CEDS Committee meetings held in the program year of 2016-2017, representatives from eighteen municipalities and regional organizations have participated.

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

- **Actions**: A summit will be held for area business associations, chambers of commerce and related organizations that will feature topics to strengthen individual participating organizations as well as establish methods to better communicate and coordinate among them.
- **Lead and Partners**: GSFABA, FCCC, NATABA, NQCC, MBA, Turners Falls RiverCulture, FCCDC, FRCOG
- **Products/Outcomes**: Broad participation by partnering organizations
- **Update**: As a step to further collaboration, FRCOG staff will bring together these organizations in 2017 as part of transportation planning activities to promoting tourism that are underway.
3. **Build collaborations with neighboring regions to better leverage economic development opportunities.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- **Actions**: Actively participate in Pioneer Valley-wide initiatives to access opportunities and ensure Franklin County perspectives are included, such as PVPC’s Plan for Progress and the EDC’s Economic Development Partners (EDP) group, Homefield Advantage Committee, and Infrastructure Committee.
- **Lead and Partners**: FRCOG, FCCC, FCREB, GCC, PVPC, EDC
- **Products/Outcomes**: Regular participation
- **Update**: Regular participation has continued. FRCOG staff were part of the team to coordinate the 2016 Western Mass Developers Conference held on June 23, 2016 at the MassMutual Center in Springfield. The Conference featured exhibit tables, a large display map and sessions on topics that promoted development and redevelopment opportunities in the CEDS Region and throughout Western Massachusetts.

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

- **Actions**: Facilitate direct assistance and referrals and access to financing for small businesses and entrepreneurs to resources along the Northern Tier.
- **Lead and Partners**: FCCDC, BRPC, FRCOG, business associations, participating municipalities, and business support-related firms
- **Products/Outcomes**: New businesses and entrepreneurs receiving assistance
Update: In January 2016, Gov. Baker awarded an Urban Agenda grant to the FCCDC in collaboration with Greenfield and North Adams to support downtown revitalization and community-based entrepreneurship. The funding from this award continues the FCCDC efforts to support and connect businesses and entrepreneurs across the Northern Tier.

The EDA recognized the strong collaborations forged through the Northern Tier Economic Resiliency Project and that continue today. The FCCDC, with their project partners, were asked to present this project as a case study at the 2017 Economic Resilience Workshop on May 11, 2017 in Burlington, MA. The EDA and FEMA sponsored workshop featured a review of the draft National Disaster Recovery Framework and encouraged incorporating economic recovery in pre- and post-disaster response planning. The Framework “guides how federal resources will be mobilized to support states and communities as they work to prepare for and recover from economic disaster impacts.”

PLACES

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

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

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

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

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

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

   • **Lead and Partners:** EOHE, MBI, Municipalities, MLPs, WiredWest, FRCOG, Cable providers, Network builders

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**Broadband: A Critical Infrastructure**

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

- **Update**: In 2017, the Baker-Polito Administration announced a new mechanism for awarding millions of State grant funding for the design and construction of last mile broadband networks in unserved communities. This mechanism provides more flexibility for municipal governments in selecting the technology (such as fiber-to-the-home, cable, or wireless) and model of ownership and operation that is most appropriate for their community. By May 2017, the Baker-Polito Administration announced Last Mile Broadband grants, including for the Franklin County towns of Ashfield ($1.41 million), Charlemont ($960,000), Colrain ($1.3 million), Heath ($820,000), Leyden ($680,000), New Salem ($750,000), Rowe ($440,000), and Shutesbury ($870,000). In December 2016, the Administration announced a grant for Warwick ($450,000) to upgrade its current wireless network. Additional unserved towns in the region may apply for this funding in the future.

In addition, the MBI announced an agreement with Comcast in August 2016 to extend cable broadband service in Buckland, Conway, Montague, Northfield and Shelburne. The MBI is contributing grant resources to fund some of Comcast’s costs for expanding the service area to at least 96% of households in the community.

Recognizing that some towns are too small to design, construct, and then own and operate a municipal broadband network, the MBI and EOHED are working with two private companies potentially willing to build, own and operate networks for the very smallest towns in the region. It is hoped that through these flexible approaches, that allows each municipality to craft a solution that best meets its needs and resources, all communities will soon and finally have high-speed broadband.

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

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

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

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

- **Update**: With Baker-Polito Administration’s revamped Last Mile Broadband Program, municipal officials of unserved communities decide the ownership and operation model to be used for the solution in their
community. Communities could choose to own and operate their network; or own their network and outsource the operation to a vendor; or could choose to have a vendor own and operate the network in the community. The Baker-Polito Administration and the MBI are providing support to the municipalities. Unserved communities are required to go through an application process to get the grant and then are reimbursed as the project meets specific milestones.

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

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

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

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

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

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

As described on the GCET website, the network will provide city-wide fiber and wi-fi broadband connectivity. In 2016, the Greenfield Town Council voted to borrow $5 million to establish the telecom network. The network infrastructure is currently being deployed, with a pricing structure for services to be announced soon.

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29 GCET website, [https://gcet.net](https://gcet.net)
B. Expand inventory of **usable industrial/commercial space** in areas near existing infrastructure and zoned for those purposes.

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

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

   - **Lead and Partners:** FRCOG, Participating municipalities, MassDEP, EDC

   - **Products/Outcomes:** Complete inventory

   - **Update:** Monitoring continues of new development and ownership changes in the planned industrial parks. In Spring 2017, data collection was completed for the Airport Industrial Park in Montague. Data collection will continue through 2017 for I-91 Industrial Park in Greenfield, and the Whately and Deerfield Industrial Parks.

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

   - **Actions:** Administer an EPA Brownfields Assessment grant for sites potentially contaminated by hazardous substances or petroleum products; and support the clean-up and reuse of assessed sites.

   - **Lead and Partners:** FRCOG, participating municipalities, EPA, MassDEP

   - **Products/Outcomes:** Number of sites and acres of land/square feet of buildings assessed

   - **Update:** Since July 2015, the FRCOG Regional Brownfields Program conducted environmental site assessment activities on seventeen properties located in the ten Franklin County towns. The amount spent on assessment activities was $128,986, as funded from the current EPA grant to the FRCOG.
In addition, the FRCOG administers a Brownfields Clean-up Revolving Loan Fund & Subgrant program using EPA grants awarded to the FROCG. In 2015, the FRCOG awarded a Subgrant of $114,560 to the Town of Greenfield for clean-up of the former Lunt Silversmith property. This Subgrant was matched with a $250,000 MassDevelopment grant for asbestos cleanup and hazardous materials abatement for the first phase of redevelopment. This phase of the project resulted in the investment of $5.5 to develop a new addiction treatment facility, which created 63 new full-time jobs.

The FRCOG Brownfields Clean-up Revolving Loan Fund & Subgrant Program was closed as an active EPA contract as of January 1, 2016. After the contract close out, FRCOG was able to retain the program income received from loan repayments for use in other projects. Using these resources, FRCOG awarded a Subgrant to the Town of Monroe in December 2016. The Subgrant is funding the clean-up of hazardous substances in the wood structure of the former Ramage Paper Mill in Monroe. See Strategy #8 for more information about this project.
Using CDBG resources, the Town of Montague completed a streetscape project on Avenue A. Montague also recently completed construction of a new public parking lot on a former brownfields site. Once a vacant auto garage with hazardous substances stored on site, the property was acquired by the Town, assessed through the FRCOG Regional Brownfields Program, and cleaned up by EPA Region 1 in 2005. A youth sculpture park was featured on the site for many years. With a 2016 MassWorks award, a parking lot was constructed on the site, so as to provide parking to support redevelopment of the former Strathmore Mill.

### Former Brownfield Site in Turners Falls

- **Initial clean-up in 2005**
- **Post clean-up (2007) and soon to be sculpture park**
- **Parking lot construction complete (2017)**

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

- **Actions:** Secure funding to clear the site of structures and debris, and construct necessary on-site utilities and infrastructure.
- **Lead and Partners:** Town of Greenfield, FRCOG
- **Products/Outcomes:** Increase in acres of industrial land available
- **Update:** The International Container Company LLC has been working with the Town of Greenfield to acquire the former Bendix/Besley property for the purpose of creating a new manufacturing facility on the site. This facility would expand the business’ current operations and would create up to 32 new jobs and leverage $9.2 million in private investment, according to their successful application for a tax increment financing agreement.

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

- **Actions:** Secure funding to prepare the site and construct necessary on-site utilities and infrastructure
- **Lead and Partners:** Town of Montague, FRCOG
- **Products/Outcomes**: Increase in acres of industrial land available
- **Update**: A Phase I ESA report was complete for the site in June 2015. The Town of Montague’s Planning & Conservation Department continues to work toward creating a 40-acre industrial park on the site. Also to be located on the site will be a solar array and a new facility for the Town’s Department of Public Works.

v. Determine feasibility of the town-owned **Bidwell Property** for industrial/commercial development and enhanced access from Route 2.
- **Actions**: Secure funding to conduct feasibility study and develop cost estimates for site development and enhanced access
- **Lead and Partners**: Town of Athol, MRPC, MassDOT
- **Products/Outcomes**: Completion of feasibility study
- **Update**: No update to report.

C. Explore the issues and opportunities for village centers without public sewer and/or water supply systems to accommodate small scale business development.

- **Actions**: Conduct GIS mapping of village centers to depict the density of these areas, and their relation to existing public sewer or water systems. Areas of a sufficient density and with opportunity for small scale commercial development, but without public water or sewer systems, will be identified, such as the Town of Conway’s Downtown Wastewater Management project. Partnering organizations will coordinate a summit of impacted communities, state officials, and other interested stakeholders to discuss challenges and measures that could be taken.
- **Lead and Partners**: FRCOG, FCRHRA, CA, Municipalities, MassDEP
- **Products/Outcomes**: Complete infrastructure & density mapping exercise; Partners host an informational event on the topic with communities and state officials.
- **Update**: FRCOG continues to conduct mapping of water and wastewater systems, as resources allow. To help communities enhance their existing systems or learn more about how to fund new systems, the FRCOG sponsored two workshops through the FRCOG Select Board Essential workshop series. In December 2015, the FRCOG hosted staff from the USDA Rural Development’s Massachusetts office to review the various funding programs available to communities and to answer questions. In March 2016, FRCOG sponsored a workshop on public water and wastewater system basics with the Massachusetts Rural Water Association as a featured speaker.

As part of the work FRCOG conducted on behalf of the Rural Policy Advocacy Commission, a map was created to depict municipalities that have water and/or wastewater systems or neither in their communities.
D. Invest to maintain the **existing transportation network** and to **expand alternative transportation options** and related support facilities.\(^{30}\)

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

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

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

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

- **Update**: In 2013, the state legislature set aside funds to purchase and rehabilitate decommissioned MBTA train sets for use on the Knowledge Corridor line. Advocacy work continues to help secure

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funding for operating costs and determine an operating entity for a Springfield to Greenfield regional commuter rail service.

ii. Increase, improve and expand transit options in the region.
   - **Actions:** Implement recommendations in FRTA Comprehensive Service Analysis.
   - **Lead and Partners:** FRTA, FRCOG, MassDOT, FTA
   - **Products/Outcomes:** Improved service options by 2016.
   - **Update:** A Comprehensive Service Analysis (CSA) was completed in 2015 for the FRTA. Using the CSA recommendations, a simplified fare system, a revised schedule and route changes were implemented in 2016. The FRTA is continuing this work by conducting a series of Community Conversations around the region in Spring 2017. Input will be gathered at these public meetings on proposed service changes for possible implementation later in the year.

iii. Build a long-term parking garage in Greenfield to serve rail and transit users and downtown business employees and customers.
   - **Actions:** Continue to support and assist in grant writing and other projects to move Greenfield Parking Garage project forward.
   - **Lead and Partners:** Greenfield, FRCOG
   - **Products/Outcomes:** Downtown parking garage by 2020.
   - **Update:** In October 2016, Governor Baker announced a $7.5 million grant to the Town of Greenfield for a four story, 350 space parking garage in the downtown. The Town will contribute $2.5 million for the estimated $10 million total project cost. Once completed, the parking garage will support the parking needs of the newly renovated and expanded Franklin County Courthouse, travelers using the passenger rail service at the John W. Olver Transit Center, as well as redeveloped buildings in the Downtown Greenfield Urban Renewal District.
5. Increase the amount of functional space available to foster the growth of small business.

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

A. Building upon the Pioneer Valley Growth Business Study\(^{31}\), assess the feasibility of creating a **growth-stage business incubator** that would meet the needs of growth stage, light industrial businesses moving out of incubator space (such as the FCCDC Venture Center) but not ready to construct their own facilities.

- **Actions**: Determine the number of growth-stage businesses in the region and compare them to the amount of available and suitably sized locations; if a sufficient number of these businesses exist, complete a feasibility study for the creation of a growth-stage incubator.
- **Lead and Partners**: FRCOG, FCCDC, UMDI
- **Products/Outcomes**: Study of Growth Stage Businesses; Incubator feasibility study
- **Update**: No update to report.

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

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

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\(^{31}\) The Pioneer Valley Growth Business Study is available online at [www.frco.org/program-services/economic-development-planning/](http://www.frco.org/program-services/economic-development-planning/).
**Update:** With support from MassDevelopment, the Town of Orange and a team of consultants led by Union Studio completed the Downtown Orange Riverfront Revitalization Study\(^{32}\) in October 2015. The Study reviewed past plans and engaged community stakeholders to identify challenges and opportunities to forge a new vision for the Downtown. The Study included a top twelve list of high priority action steps. One key action item was to focus town activities and events into the downtown core area to support existing businesses there and inspire new business development.

Unfortunately, shortly after the release of the Study, the Rodney Hunt Company announced its closure by the end of 2015. With that closure, over 200 manufacturing sector jobs located in the downtown area were lost. The factory complex has a large scale foundry. Also in the downtown is another large scale foundry in the former factory building now owned by Tire Barns Realty Trust. A recent report completed by the UMass Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning explored the feasibility of reusing a foundry facility in Downtown Orange to create an arts education center that would specialize in large scale sculpture fabrication. Titled *Forging Ahead: Towards an Arts Center in North Quabbin*\(^{33}\), it states that there is evidence to support the feasibility of such a center and recommends further research.

Two projects are underway related to the Orange Innovation Center (OIC) located on West Main Street in Downtown Orange. To support the Center’s growth, a $200,000 MassWorks award is funding the design and construction of a new parking lot across the street from the OIC. Inside the OIC, a new makerspace is being developed called LaunchSpace, A seed grant from MassDevelopment for $25,000 was awarded to LaunchSpace for predevelopment planning.

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\(^{32}\) The Downtown Orange Riverfront Revitalization Study is available at [www.townoforange.org/Pages/OrangeMA_Planning/2015-10%20Downtown%20Revitalization.pdf](http://www.townoforange.org/Pages/OrangeMA_Planning/2015-10%20Downtown%20Revitalization.pdf).

Through its Transportation Planning Program and a public health initiative called Mass In Motion, FRCOG continues to support Complete Streets. The purpose of the Complete Streets concept is to ensure the roadways have safe access for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, as well as motorists. For example, 15 locations in the last five years have had Complete Street evaluations by FRCOG staff.\(^{34}\) The Governor’s Administration encourages the use of Complete Streets programs to encourage safer and more livable neighborhoods. Adopting Complete Streets policies at the municipal level is a Best Practice Area in the Governor’s Community Compact Program. According to MassDOT, seven Franklin County towns are in the process of participating in the Complete Streets Funding Program.\(^{35}\)

The State’s Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) provides technical expertise awards for downtown community and economic development projects. It is a competitive grant program open to municipalities and requires no local financial contribution. In March 2017, four awards to CEDS Region communities were announced. They were:

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

Through the State’s District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) award, FRCOG staff will work with local officials in Conway, Deerfield, Montague, and Whately through 2017 on local economic development planning. These efforts seek to foster greater economic activity in their community in general or targeted areas like the Historic Mill District of Turners Falls or South Deerfield Center. Activities may include conducting a community surveys or convening stakeholder focus groups to find out what people would like to see in their village center, as well as bringing business development experts and local officials together to discuss how best to promote business opportunities in an area.

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\(^{34}\) Franklin County Complete Streets Project reports are available for download from http://frcog.org/program-services/transportation-planning/.

\(^{35}\) MassDOT, Massachusetts Complete Streets Funding Program Participation, https://masscompletestreets.com/Map/.
BUSINESSES

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

6. Accelerate business development and sustainability through direct support.

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

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

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

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

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

- **Update**: FCCDC continued to provide direct technical assistance, seminars and information sessions to entrepreneurs seeking general guidance or for targeted sectors, such as food production.

Entrepreneurial training in the region was expanded in 2015-2016 to include a joint launch of VVM in Greenfield, co-sponsored by the FCCDC. An initial demonstration of the VVM program was held over the summer to introduce the concept to prospective participants. In November 2015, the program began a regular schedule of meetings on the first Thursday of each month in Greenfield. Over the course of six months, twelve entrepreneurial ventures were selected to pitch their business ideas and needs to volunteer mentors that provided feedback and recommendations.
The *Franklin County Business Development Profile* was updated in 2017 to offer entrepreneurs and existing businesses a quick reference to key socio-economic data and entities that provide direct business development services. The Profile was shared with local business associations, chambers of commerce and municipal governments for their use when communicating with interested residents and prospective businesses.

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

- **Actions**: Sustain and expand access to non-traditional and gap financing through existing and new loan and investment funds
- **Lead and Partners**: FCCDC, PV Grows Loan Fund, Common Capital
- **Products/Outcomes**: Amount of loans or investments made from local funding programs
- **Update**: Access to commercial financing expanded with the launch of the PV Grows Investment Fund in fall 2015. The Fund specifically supports loans for farm and/or food ventures, and is administered by the FCCDC with input by the PV Grows Fund Advisory Committee that reviews applications to ensure mission fit. The Fund is capitalized by investments made by individuals, institutions and foundations interested in supporting the local food system.

C. Coordinate opportunities for area businesses to learn about how to sell goods or services to **governments and large institutions**.

- **Actions**: Coordinate programming on how local businesses can be a state certified minority and/or women owned business or participate in state procurement opportunities; and coordinate networking events to connect local businesses with institutions and/or large corporations.
- **Lead and Partners**: FRCOG, FCCC, FCCDC, EDC, MA Supplier Diversity Office, PV Grows
- **Products/Outcomes**: Broad participation in workshop and networking events; increase number of Franklin County businesses participating in state contracts
- **Update**: No update to report.
D. Develop programming to help with **business succession planning**.

- **Actions**: Assess if there is a critical mass of business owners approaching retirement age, and if so, determine the best manner to deliver this programming.
- **Lead and Partners**: FRCOG, FCCDC, Cooperative Institute, UMDI
- **Products/Outcomes**: Completed research study of business owners; Event and/or programing implemented
- **Update**: Through funding support from the Urban Agenda grant, the FCCDC sponsored a series succession planning seminars. Held in May 2017, the workshops focused on what business owners needed to know to be able to sell their business and transition it to new owners.

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

- **Actions**: An idea emerged from the 2014 Creating a Bold New Economy Forum was the creation of a worker-owned, commercial scale laundry cooperative to serve institutions, with Baystate Franklin Medical Center as the anchor customer. The project proposes to provide skill development and employment opportunities for people who face significant challenges when entering or re-entering the workforce.
- **Lead and Partners**: Greening Greenfield, the Wellspring Collaborative, Baystate Franklin Medical Center, Franklin County Sheriff’s Office, CA, GCC
- **Products/Outcomes**: Implementation strategy for partners
- **Update**: No update to report.

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

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

As mentioned previously in this Report, there is also considerable work being accomplished through a regional cooperative framework that has been developed to forward disaster resilient, community-based initiatives and projects. This framework has participation by the Franklin County Conservation District, the FRCOG, watershed associations, municipalities, and other stakeholders.

A. Assist individual businesses and organizations to be **prepared in case of emergencies** and to encourage their employees to be prepared.

- **Actions:** Provide materials and host a workshop for businesses and organizations on how to be prepared in case of emergency.
- **Lead and Partners:** FRCOG, WRHSAC, FCCC, FCCDC
- **Products/Outcomes:** Dissemination of materials; Workshop participation
- **Update:** Informational materials to help businesses be prepared remain available on the www.WesternMassReady.org website. As part of the outreach to share the 2017 Business Development Resource Guide, FRCOG staff recommended that Town Clerks, Town Administrators and business organizations share the “Getting Back to Business” brochure with businesses in their community.

Plans are underway to extend outreach of emergency preparedness advice to businesses in the next CEDS Program year by offering a workshop in collaboration with existing business group events.

B. Support the engagement of business entities in the **communication framework** for responding to and recovering from emergencies.

- **Actions:** Facilitate connections between emergency management leaders, other community organizations active in disasters, and business community leaders.
- **Lead and Partners:** FRCOG, WRHSAC, FCCC
- **Products/Outcomes:** Business entities included in communication framework at the region and/or municipal levels
- **Update:** In March 2016, businesses, along with colleges, schools, hospitals, and public safety entities, were invited to participate in an Active Shooter Symposium coordinated by the WRHSAC and FBI Springfield Field Office. The event had over 600 participants who heard lessons learned from previous incidents.
8. Enhance specific industry clusters through increased market understanding and asset development.

As described in both the 2015 CEDS Plan and the 2013 Franklin County Regional Plan for Sustainable Development, the region has several key industry clusters that have the opportunity to develop and grow, which will secure current jobs and create opportunities for new jobs. While these objectives are also applicable under previous goals, they are grouped together here by cluster.

*Forest, Farm, and Food Production*
There are several organizations championing efforts to strengthen and grow this cluster in Franklin County and the broader region. PV Grows is a collaborative network of individuals and organizations, including CISA, FCCDC, FRCOG, UMass and others, with a mission "dedicated to enhancing the ecological and economic sustainability and vitality of the Pioneer Valley food system." A FRCOG-led initiative is the Franklin County Farm and Food System Project, which focuses on food system infrastructure, processing, and distribution as well as on food access. Another initiative co-led by the FRCOG is The Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership, which is exploring sustainable, forest-based economic development and conservation.

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

- **Actions**: Implement the projects and recommendations of the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership Project (MTWP), such as creating business programs that support forestry and recreational tourism businesses, marketing of local wood products, and funding for outdoor recreation infrastructure improvements.
- **Lead and Partners**: FRCOG, BRPC, MA EOEEA, MA DCR, USFS, Franklin Land Trust, UMass
- **Products/Outcomes**: Support of forestry and recreational businesses
- **Update**: The Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership 2014-2015: A Plan for Forest-Based Economic Development and Conservation (updated in October 2016) explores the possibility of creating a new partnership model with a special federal

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36 PV Grows website, [www.pvgrows.net](http://www.pvgrows.net).
designation that would “recognize the region’s outstanding forestry resources and could bring with it economic and environmental benefits to the region, while keeping land in private ownership.”  The Plan was created by FRCOG and BRPC staff with the Franklin Land Trust and the MA EOEEA, and under the guidance of a local MTWP Advisory Committee. Staff also met with each Select Board in the 21-town region to gather feedback on the draft plan and governance structure. All eleven communities in Franklin County have provided letters of support to proceed with State legislation. In January 2017, legislation was filed to establish the proposed Special Designation for the 21-town region.

B. Expand use of the Western Mass. Food Processing Center and encourage greater institutional buying of local food products.

- **Actions:** Continue to expand the use of the Western Mass. Food Processing Center by food entrepreneurs as well as ventures seeking to increase the value of locally grown foods, such as through the Massachusetts Farm to Institution Project. This is being accomplished through direct technical assistance and Center improvements (such as a new individual quick freeze apparatus and expanded freezer). Efforts to connect locally grown and processed foods to large institutions (such as colleges, public schools, hospitals and others) has been successful and is to be expanded.

- **Lead and Partners:** FCCDC, PV Grows, Mass Farm to School

- **Products/Outcomes:** Increased volume of local food processed at the Food Processing Center and sold

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

C. Determine the feasibility of creating a shared cold storage facility in the region for use by farmers, food producers, and emergency food organizations.

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

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

- **Outcomes:** Feasibility study completion

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Update: To accommodate the volume of frozen products being made at the Western Mass. Food Processing Center, the FCCDC has five commercial freezer containers in its parking lot. Recognizing this inefficiency and the needs of neighboring food producers for cold storage, the FCCDC is constructing a new large freezer and cold storage facility as part of the Food Processing Center. The facility will significantly increase storage capacity and ease the loading and unloading of pallets. The facility will be completed in summer 2017 and will be used by the Food Processing Clients as well as neighboring food producers. Financing and grant funds for the project have come from USDA Rural Development, MassDevelopment, and private sources.

D. Establish access to small scale poultry processing in the region for use by area farmers.

Actions: Work is underway to determine what is needed to establish access to small scale poultry processing in the region, either as a fixed facility or a mobile facility with a predictable schedule of availability.

Lead and Partners: New England Small Farm Institute, Just Roots, PV Grows

Products/Outcomes: Establishment of poultry processing facility or access to a mobile poultry processing unit
Update: In fall 2015, the FRCOG completed the Franklin County Farm & Food System Project plan\textsuperscript{38} with funding from the Henry P. Kendall Foundation and linked to the New England Food Vision. The Plan includes research to assess the amount of food produced in the County as well as consumed. It also includes survey results from over 100 farmers who were asked about the kind of resources and services that could help them scale up their production. Based on these findings and research conducted, an action plan was developed with specific goals and objectives related to: land, production and processing, and food access and consumption. One such goal is to “increase small-batch poultry, dairy and value-added meat processing.”

Complementing the Franklin County Farm & Food System Plan was a statewide planning effort to strengthen the Commonwealth’s food system. The Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan was released by the Massachusetts Food Policy Council in December 2015, and co-authored by FRCOG staff. The Plan identifies interest by farmers to have more meat and poultry processing facilities available closer to their locations. The Plan notes, “added costs of having to take animals so far away for processing makes it harder to for farms to sell local meat at competitive prices.”\textsuperscript{39}

The New Entry Sustainable Farming Project\textsuperscript{40} with the Tufts University has a Mobile Poultry Processing Unit that can be used at the farm, and has developed online training materials for farmers to become licensed by the state to use this mobile processing unit.

\textsuperscript{38} The Franklin County Farm & Food System Project is available at www.frcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/FRCOG-FC-Farm-and-Food-System-Project-Final-Report-093015.pdf
\textsuperscript{39} Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan, Massachusetts Food Policy Council, 2015. http://mafoodsystem.org/plan/
\textsuperscript{40} New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, https://nesfp.org/farmer-training/livestock-poultry/poultry-resources/poultry-processing-resources.
Manufacturing
There are several prominent manufacturing clusters in the region, such as metal products and machining, plastics, paper and packaging, and advanced materials. To help the businesses operating in the manufacturing clusters succeed, they need an available and skilled work force, suitable sites to locate, and access to support, when needed. Each of those topics have been discussed in previous goals, specifically the Franklin-area Manufacturing Outreach Project (Goal 1), access to suitable industrial space (Goals 4 and 5), and direct business support (Goal 6). The following objective is specific to a broader effort to create a center of excellence for manufacturing in the greater region.

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

- **Actions**: Engage with University of Massachusetts and economic development leaders in western Massachusetts to determine the suitability of pursuing an EDA Manufacturing Communities Partnership award.
- **Lead and Partners**: FRCOG, PVPC, EDC, UMASS
- **Products/Outcomes**: Decision to pursue EDA Manufacturing Communities Partnership award.
- **Update**: The second round of the EDA’s Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP) program concluded in July 2015. FRCOG staff continue to monitor EDA initiatives to determine if other opportunities are announced. A program similar to the IMCP is the i6 Challenge, which seeks to create jobs and spur business growth through fostering entrepreneurship and supporting the growth of new ventures in regional innovation clusters. The FY2016 round of this program has two funding pools. One focuses on creating proof-of-concept and commercialization programs to assist early stage ventures in growing to the next stage. The other one provides support to create capital programs for early stage ventures. A collaboration of FCCDC, FRCOG, PVPC, VVM and others are applied to the i6 Challenge to support the farm and food system cluster. Unfortunately, the application was not successful.

Tourism
According to the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce (FCCC), the typical profile of visitors to this area is people who enjoy history, outdoor recreation and the arts. Families also come to visit students at the area’s independent schools or colleges. Major marketing by the FCCC and the other nearby Regional Tourism Councils is
directed to the metropolitan New York market and is generally successful. There is
great interest in encouraging more visitors and for visitors to stay longer, as opposed to
day trips or stop-overs on the way to another location. The longer stay would translate
into more dollars spent. As described by Lisa Davol of the Franklin County Chamber of
Commerce, there is also a trend for regions to collaborate more. By identifying
commonalities, they can attract visitors who might be more likely to come if there are
larger amount of offerings in the broader area. By creating events and developing
curated tours, such as Cider Days, are very successful in attracting visitors. As noted by
the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, tours that focus on food or beverages have
emerged as being particularly popular. Another perspective on the importance of the
Tourism cluster is that the qualities of the region that attract visitors can also attract new
residents and businesses, and be a recruiting tool for businesses seeking to hire
employees from outside the area.

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

i. Gain a better understanding of the adventure and outdoor recreation attractions
and services in the region, and identify potential gaps and opportunities to
enhance the cluster.

- **Actions**: Conduct an inventory of the adventure and outdoor recreation
attractions and services, collect data about the number of participants, and
identify infrastructure gaps (from visitor information access to industry support
services) or potential areas of concerns (such as the former Ramage Paper
mill in Monroe Bridge).

- **Lead and Partners**: FRCOG, FCCC, NQCC, Business Associations, and
cluster businesses

- **Products/Outcomes**: Inventory of attractions and services, and infrastructure
gaps; Number of participants engaged in cluster

- **Update**: Through the FRCOG Transportation Planning Program, efforts are
underway to inventory available public facilities of outdoor recreation assets in
the region as well as promote bicycle tourism. These reports will be
completed by fall 2017.
A particular concern for the Deerfield River rafting industry is the continued deterioration of the wood portion of the former Ramage Paper Mill in Monroe. It is located adjacent to the Station #5 dam on the Deerfield River and across from a primary river access point for rafters and kayakers. The Town of Monroe worked with the FRCOG, EOEEA, TransCanada and other stakeholders to secure resources to address this concern. An interior hazardous inventory completed for the wood structure found contamination. Once they acquired the site, FRCOG awarded the Town a brownfields clean-up subgrant for the wood structure. The Town also secured grant funding from EOEEA for demolition of the wood structure, and for the design and construction of a small overlook park. Clean-up and demolition is anticipated to be completed by the end of June 2017, with design and construction of the parking occurring in fiscal year 2018.

ii. Assess the feasibility to develop Outdoor Recreation and Immersion Centers in Downtown Orange.

- **Actions**: Conduct a study to determine the feasibility of developing these proposed Centers in Downtown Orange.
- **Lead and Partners**: Town of Orange
- **Products/Outcomes**: Study completed to support development of new attractions
- **Update**: No update to report.

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

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

Update: The Amtrak Vermonter passenger rail service went became operational on December 29, 2014. According to statistics from the National Association of Railroad Passengers\textsuperscript{41}, there were 5,315 riders embarking and disembarking at the Greenfield station in 2015. For 2016, ridership increased by 11% to 5,885. The top destination from the Greenfield station was to New York, NY.

A project is underway by the FRCOG Transportation Planning Program to evaluate the use of this passenger rail service by visitors to Franklin County and to develop recommendations to increase this use. The report will be completed in fall 2017.

Creative Economy

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

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

- Actions: Coordinate Art Buzz events and a Creative Economy Summit to provide networking and professional development opportunities.
- Lead and Partners: FACP, PVCEN
- Products/Outcomes: Broad participation by people working in the Creative Economy at Summit and/or Art Buzz events
- Update: Coordinated by the FACP with support from PVCEN, Creative Economy Summit 5 was held in June 2015 at Greenfield Community College. The one-day summit included a keynote presentation by the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Digital Games Institute and offered panel sessions on the topics of visibility, talent, business

\textsuperscript{41} National Association of Railroad Passengers, www.narprail.org/our-issues/ridership-statistics/
development, and space. It is anticipated that future Summits will be coordinated as part of a larger PVCEN endeavor.

FACP has suspended a regular schedule of Art Buzz events, and instead co-hosts a Plug Into The Creative Valley event held in Franklin County. Coordinated by the PVCEN, the Plug Into The Creative Valley networking events happen monthly in different locations around the Pioneer Valley region. The FACP hosted a Plug In event in Greenfield in September 2015, which featured talks by a local television producer and arts columnist on how creative businesses can best pitch their projects for being covered in the media. The FACP also hosted a Plug In event in Shelburne Falls in September 2016, which brought people from across the Pioneer Valley to network and make connections.

I. Complete a creative economy asset mapping project for the West County sub-region that could be replicated across the county, to identify and better understand this cluster’s capacities, skills, needs and resources, and how it may be integrated with other clusters and industries. Information gained from this project could be used as the basis for a regional Creative Economy Plan and branding effort.

- **Actions:** complete the Connecting Commerce & Community: Creative Economy Survey for West County, and use the materials developed and lessons learned to replicate the project across Franklin County.
- **Lead and Partners:** GSFABA, FACP, PVCEN, local arts organizations and businesses
- **Products/Outcomes:** Completion of Creative Economy survey responses for West County
- **Update:** In 2017, the GSFABA created a new non-profit subsidiary called West County Arts & Culture (WCAC). The purpose of forming this new entity was “to promote the many vibrant arts and culture initiatives in our region that are a vital part of our economy and quality of life.” The WCAC will take over management of HATCH, which stands for Hilltown Arts: Thriving Community Happenings. Through HATCH, participating artists get help developing and funding community project ideas. As of Spring 2017, ten projects have been supported over two rounds of HATCH.

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Funding for HATCH comes in part from a Massachusetts Cultural Council grant to GSFABA.

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

- **Actions**: Conduct a region-wide inventory of existing and proposed venues to better understand their capacity, performance space, and management structure. Best practices and areas for collaboration will be identified.
- **Lead and Partners**: FRCOG, FACP, Arts organizations, Venue owners
- **Products/Outcomes**: Completion of study
- **Update**: The FRCOG is conducting an inventory of performance venues in the county and in adjacent areas. Over the past two years, the some local venues have experienced changes that have expanded performance opportunities. The Arena Civic Theatre has used different venues around the county for performances, including the upstairs auditorium of the Orange Town Hall. The Town of Orange has been very interested in having this facility used for arts and cultural events. The Shea Theater in Turners Falls transitioned to new management and launched a fundraising campaign for facility improvements. The top floor of the Arts Block in Greenfield is being used by the Silverthorne Theater Company for a series of performances in Spring and Summer 2017.
Chapter 5: Evaluation Framework

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

It should be noted that it is challenging to have an accurate annual account of the number of jobs and amount of private investment leveraged due to the long-term nature of some CEDS Program initiatives. Many of the projects pursued are multi-year in nature. For example, the creation of an industrial park, the installation of infrastructure or the redevelopment of a building, may take years from the initial planning stage to completion. Upon completion, the amount of private investment and jobs created may be calculated as businesses lease or purchase property. In the case of infrastructure projects, such as the deployment of last mile broadband access, sometimes it is not possible to account for all the jobs and investment made as a result this network. To evaluate the progress of 2015 CEDS Plan goals and strategies, the following performance measures will be tracked annually.

**Measurement #1 - Number of Projects**

As the number of CEDS Plan projects and initiatives and related efforts are implemented, will be documented in each CEDS Annual Report, in the most appropriate year the project or initiative was launched. The next table, Table 11, includes projects and initiatives for the 2016-2017 CEDS Program year.

**Measurement #2 - Number of Jobs Created and Retained**

As CEDS Plan projects and initiatives and related efforts are implemented, the number of jobs created and retained will be documented in each CEDS Annual Report in the year the project or initiative was completed. Table 11 includes the number of jobs created and retained for 2016-2017 CEDS Program year projects and initiatives and related efforts.
Measurement #3 - Number and Types of Investments Undertaken

As CEDS Plan projects and initiatives and related efforts are implemented, the number and types of investments undertaken (including the amount of private sector investment made) in the region will be reported in each CEDS Annual Report. Table 11 includes the number and types of investments undertaken for 2016-2017 CEDS Program year projects and initiatives and related efforts.

Table 11: CEDS Program Year Measurements #1-3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Jobs*</th>
<th>Project Type</th>
<th>Investment Estimate (Public or Private source)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monroe Mill Wood Structure Brownfields Clean-up and Demolition</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Redevelopment</td>
<td>$100,000 (public, clean-up) $205,000 (public, demo) $30,000 (private)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCET (Greenfield Community Energy and Technology) fiber-wireless broadband network</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>$5,000,000 (public) (Private investment not available)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Agreements in the Economic Target Area (ETA) for: William Green, Inc. (Shelburne), Decker Machine Works, Inc. (Greenfield), and International Container Co. LLC. (Greenfield)</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>Construction of three Manufacturing facilities</td>
<td>$12,800,000 (private)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCCDC Lending Program’s Business Loans Issued</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>Business Development</td>
<td>$3,313,900 (private) $619,980 (public, private)**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: FRCOG Brownfields Subgrant reports; Town of Greenfield – Town Council 4/20/16 Minutes and Mayor’s office; MA MOBD; FCCDC Lending Program
TBD = Number is to be determined.
* Includes both new jobs created and jobs retained. It also includes jobs associated with the redevelopment or construction phase of a project.
** Private sector investment data is not available. However, multiple studies, including the Federal Communication Commission’s National Broadband Plan, describes broadband as a “foundation for economic growth, job creation, global competitiveness and a better way of life.”
*** Includes loans from publicly funded grants to the FCCDC as well as from the PV Grows Investment Fund, which was capitalized with funds from private foundations and individuals.

Measurement #4 – Changes in Economic Environment in the Region

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

Table 12: Select Economic Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>CEDS Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016 Size of Labor Force</td>
<td>39,307 (↓ -0.1%)</td>
<td>64,543 (↔ 0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(based on where people live)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 Number of Total Private</td>
<td>20,104 (↑ 2.5%)</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector Employed* (based on</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>where the job is located)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 Average Earnings Per Job</td>
<td>$42,383 (↑ 7.0%)</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(based on where the job is</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>located)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Massachusetts Labor and Workforce Development, Labor Market Information, 2016; U.S. Department of Commerce, County Business Patterns, 2015; Commerce Department, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2015

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

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

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

CEDS Committee membership consists of appointments form each member municipality and appointments from regional entities. Not all seats on the Committee are filled. All meeting notices are posted on the FRCOG website calendar.

Table 13: CEDS Committee Members for 2016-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appointing Authority</th>
<th>Committee Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town of Bernardston</td>
<td>Stanley Garland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Buckland</td>
<td>Michael McCusker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Charlemont</td>
<td>Vaughn Tower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Colrain</td>
<td>Eileen Sauvageau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Deerfield</td>
<td>Carolyn Shores- Ness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Greenfield</td>
<td>Larry Jutres/John Lunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Heath</td>
<td>Art Schwenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Leverett</td>
<td>Heather Hutchinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Montague</td>
<td>Walter Ramsey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of New Salem</td>
<td>John Ryan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Northfield</td>
<td>Jerry Wagener/Julie Robertson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Orange</td>
<td>Kevin Kennedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Wendell</td>
<td>Nan Riebschlaeger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Wendell</td>
<td>Jonathan Edwards</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRCOG Executive Committee</td>
<td>Mayor Bill Martin; Alternate: Linda Dunlavy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRCOG Executive Committee</td>
<td>Martha Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin Regional Planning Board</td>
<td>Tom Hutcheson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin Regional Planning Board</td>
<td>Jeanie Schermesser</td>
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<td>Franklin Regional Planning Board</td>
<td>Andrea Donlon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin Regional Planning Board</td>
<td>Ann Darling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin Regional Planning Board</td>
<td>Winnephred Stone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin County Community Development Corporation</td>
<td>Gary Dillensneider</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin County Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>John Waite</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin County Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Ann Hamilton/Lisa Davol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Shelburne Falls Area Business Association</td>
<td>Carmela Lanza-Weil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin-Hampshire Regional Employment Board</td>
<td>Patricia Crosby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin County Housing &amp; Redevelopment Authority</td>
<td>Fran Pheeny/Glen Ohlund</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Economic Development District (EDD) Governing Board membership consists of appointments made by the CEDS Committee in 2014 to meet EDA guidelines in affect at that time. In November 2015, the EDD Governing Board Procedural Rules were amended. As part of this amendment, the appointment process updated to reflect new EDA guidelines. The new appointing authority is the FRCOG Executive Committee.

Table 14: EDD Board Members for 2016-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Representation</th>
<th>Governing Board Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chamber Executive Director</td>
<td>Ann Hamilton/Lisa Davol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamber Executive Director</td>
<td>Carmela Lanza-Weil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elected Official</td>
<td>Carolyn Shores-Ness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elected Official</td>
<td>Nan Riebschlaeger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government Employee</td>
<td>Larry Jutres/John Lunt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government Employee</td>
<td>Walter Ramsey</td>
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<td>Government Employee</td>
<td>Kevin Kennedy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government Employee</td>
<td>Linda Dunlavy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government Employee</td>
<td>Sam Lovejoy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Secondary Education</td>
<td>Art Schwenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>Michael McCusker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce Development</td>
<td>Gary Dillensneider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce Development</td>
<td>Patricia Crosby</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B – Economic Development Project Survey Responses

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>Project Location</th>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Lead Organization</th>
<th>Project Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education &amp; Entrepreneurial Center</td>
<td>Athol</td>
<td>Funding for lease or purchase of modern facility to be used by local schools, MWCC, and GCC to host classes, particularly in tech and innovative skills development.</td>
<td>North Quabbin Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Town of Athol, Mt. Watchusett Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Route 2 Exit</td>
<td>Athol</td>
<td>A new Route 2 Exit, between exits 17 and 18, would relieve congestion at other exits and provide much-needed access for manufacturing sites (current and future) along South Athol Rd.</td>
<td>Town of Athol</td>
<td>Mass DOT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LP Athol &quot;Twist Mill&quot; Redevelopment Project</td>
<td>Athol - 134 Chestnut Hill Ave</td>
<td>This 360,000 SF riverfront facility is ripe for redevelopment into a multi-use residential and retail center, and has received support from local and state leaders. It requires some public infrastructure investment.</td>
<td>Town of Athol</td>
<td>LP Athol Inc., Mass-Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York Theater Redevelopment</td>
<td>Athol - 469 Main St</td>
<td>Main Street Athol historic theater formerly known as the York Theater, now vacant, has redevelopment potential as multi-use performance and event center.</td>
<td>Town of Athol</td>
<td>North Quabbin Chamber of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Bidwell Property&quot; Development Feasibility Study</td>
<td>Athol - South Athol Rd</td>
<td>100 acres owned by the Town of Athol is a prime site for industrial or mixed-use development. A feasibility study would create a vision for future uses and highway access (&quot;New Route 2 Exit&quot;).</td>
<td>Town of Athol</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Title</td>
<td>Project Location</td>
<td>Project Description</td>
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<td>Project Partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shelburne Falls Market Analysis</td>
<td>Buckland and Shelburne - Village Business District</td>
<td>The last Market Analysis was completed in 1997. Shelburne Falls has been fortunate in the past when storefronts became available they would quickly fill. However, that is not the case now. While very successful during May - November, the business district has become dependent on tourism and struggles during the off season. An updated Analysis would ask, what type of businesses would thrive, among other questions.</td>
<td>Greater Shelburne Falls Area Business Association (GSFABA)</td>
<td>Shelburne Select Board; Buckland Select Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Wastewater Management</td>
<td>Conway - Village Center</td>
<td>Exploring options for a community septic system or other wastewater management option to allow increased development in the village center to address the problem of the lack of capacity for growth, even by infill, due to the lack of wastewater management.</td>
<td>Conway Planning Board</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Capacity for Economic Growth in Franklin County</td>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td>To host a one day Summit for Franklin County Business Associations and Chambers of Commerce that will provide the opportunity to increase awareness and share resources, strategies, and models that will assist in strengthening each organization’s capacity.</td>
<td>Joint</td>
<td>GSFABA; Northfield Area Tourism &amp; Business Assoc.; Franklin County Chamber; North Quabbin Chamber; Montague Business Assoc.; Turners Falls RiverCulture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting Commerce &amp; Community: Creative Economy Survey</td>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td>GSFABA was awarded a two-year Adams Grant for the first phase of a model economic program for West County. With this it developed and implemented an assets mapping project to identify and understand capacities, skills and assets of artists and cultural institutions, and then other sectors of the West County economy. In 2014, the Adams Grant enabled GSFABA to redesign its website to disseminate its newly developed Creative Economy Survey and gather data about the arts in Franklin County. There are three activities of this initiative that GSFABA will carry out: (1) Asset Mapping, (2) Public Outreach &amp; Community engagement, and (3) Planning.</td>
<td>Greater Shelburne Falls Area Business Association</td>
<td>Fostering Arts &amp; Culture Project; Pioneer Valley Creative Economy Network; Local arts organizations, business associations and chambers of commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Title</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin-area Manufacturing Outreach Project</td>
<td>Franklin County</td>
<td>Ensure the continuing success and effectiveness of the Middle Skills Manufacturing Initiative, which contributed to a state-of-the-art training lab at FCTS and a 13-week advanced training program. Key to the effort has been the FHREB's Manufacturing Market Manager/Coach, which engages businesses; coaches candidates; places graduates into jobs; and is helping to pilot broader “Foundational Manufacturing” training at GCC. The grant for this position will be exhausted by April 2016. This project would ensure outreach to manufacturers continues; training needs and curriculum are kept up-to-date; and new job opportunities are identified and promoted.</td>
<td>Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board</td>
<td>Franklin County Technical School; Greenfield Community College; Area employers including VSS, Inc. duMont Co., Kennametal, Inc., Bete Fog Nozzle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenfield Laundry Project</td>
<td>Franklin County - Greenfield or Turners Falls</td>
<td>A worker owned cooperative laundry is proposed with Baystate Franklin Medical Center (BFMC) as the lead consumer. Laundry will serve BFMC, nursing homes, restaurants and others. It will replace the present provider which is a national company. The goal is to create high quality services to meet needs of the consumer, while cutting transportation costs and allowing for quick response. In addition, the laundry will partner with Community Action and the Franklin County House of Correction to offer low-income people an opportunity to learn skills, become equity owners, and engage in new ways with the community. Ten organizations are involved in the planning process.</td>
<td>Greening Greenfield, Wellspring Collaborative, Baystate Franklin Medical Center</td>
<td>Franklin County Sheriff; Community Action; Greenfield Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WiredWest Fiber Network</td>
<td>Franklin County - WiredWest towns</td>
<td>Construction and operation of a regional fiber broadband network to serve all homes and businesses in participating towns.</td>
<td>WiredWest MLP Cooperative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenfield TelNet Project</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>Municipal Telecommunications Services project to be constructed.</td>
<td>City of Greenfield</td>
<td>Kelley Management Group; Greenfield Community Technology Advisory Committee, MBI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Title</td>
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<tr>
<td>Former Besley-Bendix Property</td>
<td>Greenfield - 180 Laurel St</td>
<td>The City wants to move develop a garden industrial eco-park. The Eco-park would be developed using green technology for infrastructure, be fast track permitted and offer reduced utility costs via a PV solar array. This site has been identified as the preferred site for an interconnection and data facility. Greenfield is seeking funding to construct the Laurel St Extension with underground utilities. Greenfield is also seeking funding to demolish the existing dilapidated 94,000 SF building on the site.</td>
<td>City of Greenfield</td>
<td>FRCOG; Commonwealth of Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eco-Industrial Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Olive Street Parking Garage</td>
<td>Greenfield - Olive St</td>
<td>Parking garage for supplemental parking for offices, businesses, courthouse, John W. Olver Transit Center, and visitors and shoppers.</td>
<td>City of Greenfield</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Treatment Center</td>
<td>Greenfield - 298 Federal St</td>
<td>Substantial rehabilitation of abandoned industrial buildings and brownfield site for a 65-Bed acute and intermediate treatment of addiction disorders.</td>
<td>City of Greenfield</td>
<td>401 Liberty Street, LLC; Behavior Health Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Treatment Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>I-91 Industrial Park Expansion</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>Substantial site preparation work for new lots in the Industrial Park</td>
<td>City of Greenfield</td>
<td>FRCOG, Commonwealth of Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First National Bank</td>
<td>9 Bank Row, Greenfield</td>
<td>Renovation of abandoned building for downtown cultural center</td>
<td>City of Greenfield</td>
<td>Greenfield Redevelopment Authority, Commonwealth of Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Infrastructure</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>Upgrades to water and sewer infrastructure in the downtown area</td>
<td>City of Greenfield</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Massachusetts, FRCOG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abercrombie Building</td>
<td>56 Bank Row, Greenfield</td>
<td>Renovation of empty building for new office space</td>
<td>City of Greenfield</td>
<td>Studio Junction LLC, Commonwealth of Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WiredWest Final Mile</td>
<td>Heath</td>
<td>Final mile of Mass Broadband Initiative (MBI) providing high speed fiber internet to homes/businesses to be overseen by WiredWest.</td>
<td>WiredWest</td>
<td>MBI; FRCOG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Title</td>
<td>Project Location</td>
<td>Project Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leverett Fiber to the Home Project</td>
<td>Leverett</td>
<td>Municipal construction of high speed internet to every household in town.</td>
<td>Leverett Municipal Light Plant and Town of Leverett</td>
<td>Crocker Communications; Millennium Communications; HG&amp;E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canal District Revitalization</td>
<td>Montague - Downtown</td>
<td>Public-private partnership to rehabilitate five mill sites by performing environmental remediation, access and infrastructure improvements, and marketing municipally owned 230,000 square feet Strathmore Mill complex to qualified developers. Funding needed to repair pedestrian bridges, and to remediate and demolish section of former Strathmore Mill and Railroad Salvage Building.</td>
<td>Montague Planning and Conservation Department</td>
<td>Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Turners Falls Paper Company, private developers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnpike Road Industrial Park</td>
<td>Montague - Off Sandy Lane</td>
<td>45 acre planned light-industrial park on municipal land with planned 6 MW solar facility. Schematic design complete. Funding needed to extend infrastructure on Sandy Lane.</td>
<td>Montague Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>FRCOG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American Cultural Heritage</td>
<td>Turners Falls</td>
<td>The Center would include interpretive history of Native American life in the Pioneer Valley, and host artifacts and provide a place to advance research on the rich pre-colonial history of the area. Seeking a planning and feasibility grant to determine suitable location, funding needs and pre-development.</td>
<td>Montague Board of Selectmen, local Tribal Historic Preservation Offices</td>
<td>National Park Service Battlefield Protection Program, local historical commissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors Center</td>
<td>Northfield - Main Street</td>
<td>Center would include: gallery, public bathrooms and parking. Seeking a planning and feasibility grant to determine a suitable location, funding needs and pre-development.</td>
<td>Northfield Business Association</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West River Business Incubator</td>
<td>Orange - 100-140 West</td>
<td>The Town of Orange sees need to support an active and growing business cluster in and around the Orange Innovation Center. The need for additional parking, lighting and amenities (such as trails, a fitness course) would remove the barrier to growth and development. Partners to the project, the Innovation Center, OIC Fitness Club and Honest Weight Artisan Beer are all in need of these improvements to ensure future growth.</td>
<td>Town of Orange</td>
<td>Orange Innovation Center; OIC Fitness Club; Honest Weight Artisan Beer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Title</td>
<td>Project Location</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Arts Center Development</td>
<td>Orange - 6 Prospect St</td>
<td>The Town would like to be a catalyst in developing a sustainable Cultural Arts Center in downtown Orange. The existing Auditorium located at 6 Prospect St is an excellent performance space designed by Architect, Elbridge Boyden (same design as Mechanics Hall in Worcester, MA) and is currently underutilized. The performance space has the potential to become a cultural arts center for the arts community in Town.</td>
<td>Town of Orange</td>
<td>The Dance Studio; Quabbin Woods Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Regional Attraction Through Recreation &amp; Immersion Centers</td>
<td>Orange - Downtown</td>
<td>The Town of Orange would like to pull existing plans, studies and concepts into one overarching study to both verify and quantify the priority economic development strategy that has identify to-date. The Town could realize real economic transformation by developing attraction through &quot;Recreation and Immersion Centers&quot;. We would like to develop meaningful data to support this concept.</td>
<td>Town of Orange</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warwick Solar Farm on closed landfill</td>
<td>Warwick - Allen Lot</td>
<td>In 2014 Town Meeting approved by-right zoning for commercial solar photovoltaic development on this 53 acre parcel, which has been approved by the Attorney General. Planning board created site plan review process and Selectboard instituted expedited permitting process for this targeted site.</td>
<td>Warwick Building and Energy Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>