On June 30, 1997 County Government in Franklin County was abolished. On July 1, 1997 the Franklin Regional Council of Governments was born with a new Charter, governance, membership and financing model, and the unanimous support of all 26 Franklin County Towns. Since then, the FRCOG has strived to be a valuable resource, strong advocate, and provider of services for the municipalities of Franklin County. To celebrate, throughout July, August and September of 2017 the FRCOG looked back with daily Facebook and Twitter posts of our history, accomplishments and highlights. Using Storymap, a GIS-based interactive software, a history of the FRCOG’s first 20 years was created and now resides on our web site, www.frcog.org. In addition, we had a great party and open house on October 13th with interactive activities including an erosion-simulation tank, a CPR demonstration, administering flu shots, and a cookie contest judged by Senator Stan Rosenberg.

The FRCOG is a governmental body that serves and assists the municipalities of Franklin County. We provide regional and municipal services to our member towns using a diversity of funding sources and strategies.
BROWNFIELDS

The Regional Brownfields Program supports assessment and clean-up of potentially contaminated sites for the purpose of returning them to productive use. Under the FRCOG’s current EPA grant, over $28,000 of environmental site assessment work was conducted on eight sites in seven towns in 2017. These sites included vacant industrial properties acquired by Towns through tax title proceedings, and privately owned parcels with a history of automotive repair use and/or dumping of debris. Through a separate EPA grant, the FRCOG administered a revolving loan fund and subgrant program to support brownfields clean-up on eligible properties. The Town of Monroe received a $100,000 grant to clean-up and remove the wood structure of the former Ramage Paper Mill in 2017. In Greenfield, another project was converting the balance of the First National Bank Building clean-up loan to a subgrant, thus allowing for the building’s ownership to be transferred from the Franklin County Community Development Corporation to the Greenfield Redevelopment Authority. This sets the stage for future redevelopment in downtown Greenfield by the City.

ERVING INTERNATIONAL PAPER MILL REUSE

The FRCOG is working with the Town of Erving to support the clean-up and reuse of the former International Paper Mill Facility. This work includes preparing presentation materials about the project, and identifying possible funding sources for redevelopment.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA) WORK

The FRCOG conducts planning activities that foster economic development and maintain the region’s eligibility for select federal funding programs. With funding from an EDA grant, and with guidance from the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee, FRCOG staff completed the 2017 CEDS Annual Report. The Report provides an update on the regional economy and outlines strategies to promote job growth and spur investment. Specific tasks included providing technical assistance to local communities, participating in the Pioneer Valley Workforce Skills Cabinet, assisting mill redevelopment efforts, tracking major development projects, and collaborating with other regions to leverage opportunities. In addition, staff conducted an inventory of parcels in the six planned industrial parks of Franklin County to determine the amount of remaining developable space.

MILL’S WOOD STRUCTURE REDEVELOPMENT IN MONROE

The FRCOG worked with the Town of Monroe to complete the clean-up and demolition of the wooden portion of the former Ramage Paper Mill, known as the Wood Structure, in 2017. The potential for the deteriorating structure to fall into the Deerfield River was of great concern to the town, hydroelectric companies, and rafting businesses. Funds from the FRCOG Brownfields Program, the MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), and Great River Hydro (formerly TransCanada) were used. Next, a grant from EEA is funding the construction of a small overlook park on the site, which will have a scenic view of the Deerfield River.

View of the site after the wooden mill structure was cleaned up of hazardous materials and demolished, with rafters on the Deerfield River.
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**PASSENGER RAIL**

The efforts continue to expand passenger rail service to Franklin County. A collaboration of the FRCOG, PVPC, MassDOT and other stakeholders is working to bring four additional daily trains to run between Greenfield and Springfield in 2018, which will allow for a same-day roundtrip to New York City. Expansion of the passenger service in this corridor is well justified. Ridership on the Vermonter since the rerouting of the train through Greenfield and Northampton has far exceeded projections, with nearly 6,000 riders using the Greenfield station and another 17,000 using the Northampton station in 2016. In 2017, the FRCOG completed a study on visitors traveling by passenger rail and how to attract more visitors by rail to the region. The study’s recommendations are being implemented in 2018.

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**SCENIC BYWAYS LAND PROTECTION**

Staff continued working with the Franklin Land Trust, MassDOT, the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Wildlife to permanently protect important scenic, natural and agricultural landscapes along the scenic byways in Franklin County. In 2017, an additional 44 acres of farmland were permanently protected on the Connecticut River Scenic Byway in Sunderland. The total amount of land protected to date under this program is 1,322 acres.

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Passengers disembarking from Amtrak's Vermonter service in Greenfield.

Farmland that was protected on the Connecticut River Scenic Byway in Sunderland.
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

COMMUNITIES THAT CARE COALITION
The FRCOG's Partnership for Youth co-hosts the Communities That Care Coalition (CTC) with Community Action. This effort has been successful in reducing youth substance use in the region, and has now taken on the additional goal of improving youth nutrition and physical activity. In 2017 the Coalition released a report on Food Access in Franklin County and the North Quabbin, based on extensive local research. This report gives insights into barriers to healthy food access in the region, as well as possible solutions.

The Coalition also produced a report entitled What Schools Can Do: Creative Ways Franklin County and North Quabbin Schools are Implementing DESE Guidance on Substance Use Prevention. This report highlights best practices being implemented by our local school districts and provides suggestions for further policy-level strategies that have been shown to be effective.

In April, CTC held its first Racial Justice Dinner, and in May at the Communities That Care Full Coalition Meeting, the Coalition offered participants a workshop on Health Equity and Race. Other CTC trainings in 2017 included training of trainers in the LifeSkills Program, and Local Food Procurement/Menu Planning for institutional food service directors.

OPIOID & OTHER SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION IN FRANKLIN COUNTY
The FRCOG is a partner in numerous efforts that focus on the prevention and treatment of heroin, prescription, and other drug abuse in Franklin County/North Quabbin. Staff sit on the Executive Council of the Opioid Task Force (OTF), participate in the Healthcare Solutions and Outreach and Education Committees of the Task Force, and seek to represent the needs of the region's municipalities in new OTF projects. The Partnership for Youth (PFY) and the OTF worked together to encourage all area middle schools to implement the LifeSkills curriculum that teaches social and emotional skills for dealing with risky situations, and has been shown to reduce substance use by middle and high school students. By the close of 2017, every Franklin County School District had begun implementing this far-reaching protective measure for the region's young people.
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

FRANKLIN COUNTY/NORTH QUABBIN COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CHIP)

Staff coordinated the initial year of implementation of the region’s first coordinated Community Health Improvement Planning effort, bringing together over a dozen organizations dedicated to improving the physical and mental health of all Franklin County residents. Broad groups of stakeholders in health, housing, human services, planning, and education convened at quarterly meetings to review progress on the evidence-based strategies chosen as 2017 priorities: Housing Rehabilitation and Loans, Fluoride Varnish, the Fair Share Amendment, Evidence-Based Substance Use Prevention Curriculum in the Schools, and Increasing Access to Green Spaces and Parks.

MASS IN MOTION

Mass in Motion is a statewide movement that promotes opportunities for healthy eating and active living in the places people live, learn, work and play. As part of the Franklin County Mass in Motion project, staff are completing five tasks with funding from the Center for Disease Control. This funding is intended to help communities improve walking networks, and promote walking for health and everyday transportation. During 2017, work continued to revise the Walk Franklin County maps to make them more user-friendly. Staff also identified locations and installed walking wayfinding signs in Orange. Additionally, Complete Streets assessments were conducted for five walking routes in environmental justice areas. Staff also worked in cooperation with the FRCOG’s regional health nurse to engage seniors who participate in a weekly walking group at the Shelburne Senior Center. A walk audit training session was conducted on November 14, 2017. At the conclusion of the training, the participants volunteered to assess a section of the Walk Franklin County walking route in Shelburne Falls. The FRCOG staff compiled the observations of the walk audits.

DIABETES PREVENTION PROGRAM

As part of expanded Mass in Motion efforts, staff are working with two local YMCAs to promote their Diabetes Prevention Programs (DPP). DPP is a one-year (25 session) group program for people who have been identified as Pre-diabetic. Its goal is to guide them in making behavior changes related to nutrition and physical activity that will help prevent the onset of diabetes. Both the Athol Area YMCA and the YMCA in Greenfield have been running DPP groups throughout 2017, with great success for the participants in terms of increased physical activity, healthy eating, and weight loss. This program is part of a national study by the Centers for Disease Control to determine if community-based agencies can run diabetes prevention programs as successfully, and more cost-effectively, than clinical sites.
**HEALTHY COMMUNITIES**

**PARENT SOCIAL MARKETING CAMPAIGN**

The messages parents give their children have a tremendous influence on their children’s behavior. Staff disseminated messages (generously printed by Baystate Franklin Medical Center) through postcards and flyers sent to parents of middle and high school students in participating Franklin County and North Quabbin schools. Messages on bookmarks were disseminated through school mailings in 2017.

![Marketing materials](image)

**PROMOTING FARM TO INSTITUTION**

Using local food in institutional food services, like those at schools or hospitals, increases healthy eating and supports the local economy. Staff are working with the Franklin County Food Council and Greater Quabbin Food Alliance to achieve these ends through relationships with food service directors in all of the K-12 school districts in the region, as well as the Franklin County House of Corrections, Baystate Franklin Medical Center, Meals on Wheels, and Greenfield Community College. The group’s work is informed by the Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan which was completed in 2016.

**TEEN HEALTH SURVEY**

As part of its work co-leading the Communities That Care Coalition, the Partnership for Youth has conducted a health survey of Franklin County and North Quabbin middle and high school students every year since 2003. Results from the 2017 Teen Health Survey show that since that time, alcohol use has fallen by 54%, binge drinking by 63%, marijuana use by 30% and cigarette smoking by 63%. Seven out of 10 local students do not use any of these substances. The 2017 survey incorporated a US Department of Education survey on school climate. Survey findings are available at: [http://www.communitiesthatcarecoalition.org/surveys](http://www.communitiesthatcarecoalition.org/surveys)

![Current Youth Substance Use](image)

Teen substance use has steadily declined over the past 14 years.
The CPHS Health District provides comprehensive municipal public health services to the eleven communities of Buckland, Charlemont, Conway, Deerfield, Gill, Hawley, Heath, Leyden, Monroe, Rowe and Shelburne. The CPHS has four public health programs: community sanitation, food safety, Title 5 and private well safety, and public health nursing. Each member community has a representative on the CPHS Oversight Board, which meets monthly to review budgets and potential grant applications, and to draft policies. The 2017 district programming highlights include:

- Provided Public Health Nursing services in 1,185 encounters to over 282 residents living with chronic diseases.
- Convened two Healthy Aging planning meetings with member towns to begin conversations on how our communities can be more age-friendly.
- Processed 169 permits from the district’s online permitting program, and registered an additional 71 new users, for a total of 367 users.
- Conducted approximately 250 food, septic, well, housing, camp, motel, B&B, and pool inspections in member towns.
- Collected and exchanged 41 quart and 75 gallon-sized sharps containers for residents in cooperation with the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District.
- Conducted monitoring of 220 reported illnesses and conducted follow-up investigation and submitted required case reporting to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health on behalf of CPHS Boards of Health.
- Collaborated with CPHS member towns to conduct 15 community flu clinics serving 843 area residents. This year the vaccination program included a collaborative shingles clinic and new high-dose flu vaccine for specific elders.
- Trained over 50 local food service employees in proper food safety methods, and continued to improve data collection at more than 60 food establishments.
- Provided subsidized tick testing for 143 district residents with 29% testing positive for Lyme Disease.
MUNICIPAL SERVICES

COLLECTIVE PURCHASING PROGRAM
The Collective Purchasing Program provides bidding and contract administration services for highway products and services, fuel, dog tags and licenses, and elevator & fire alarm maintenance. In addition to the collective bids, the FRCOG Chief Procurement Officer assisted several Towns with procurements for highway and fire trucks, various Town building and site reconstruction/improvements, sidewalk and bridge construction, debris cleanup, water system improvements, tennis court construction, emergency generators, and Owners Project Manager services. Several towns have become Green Communities, and FRCOG procurement services have helped to make their energy saving projects a reality.

Pre-bid meeting for the Monroe Low Level Outlet Valve Replacement Project.

FOOD SAFETY PROJECT
The federally-funded CPHS food safety program provided ServSafe Manager training to 54 individuals from 49 communities, representing 51 separate food establishments. These trainings also provided the participants with the Massachusetts Allergens Awareness Training and Choke Saver Training, making 51 food establishments safer for their customers. In addition, the food safety training program was available to field questions from food vendors on a variety of topics. Staff are currently going through the process of becoming Standardized Food Safety Inspection Officers, a designation that ensures that food safety staff are well trained and prepared for all retail food safety issues.

FRANKLIN COUNTY COOPERATIVE INSPECTION PROGRAM
The FCCIP provided building, zoning, plumbing, wiring and code enforcement services to 15 Towns, issuing 1,304 building permits that included 29 permits for new single family dwellings and 10 permits for new commercial structures. There were 659 wiring permits and 439 plumbing and gas permits. In addition, 210 periodic inspections that assess safety in public and multi-unit buildings were performed and Certificates of Inspection issued. Online permit applications have been simplified and made more user-friendly. As of January 1, 2018, there were 4,586 registered users, and since its launch on July 1, 2011 there have been 15,898 online permit applications.

MUNICIPAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
Twelve (12) Franklin County Towns received assistance from the FRCOG’s Municipal Financial Management Specialist to implement finance-related best practices under the Baker-Polito Administration’s Community Compact Program. Projects included: formulating financial policies, developing capital improvement programs, retooling budget documents, and moving toward long-range forecasting. There is no cost to Towns that participate in the Community Compact program and, with the successful completion of projects, points are earned toward future State grant programs.

PUBLIC SAFETY CROSS-JURISDICTIONAL SHARING
Staff worked with a number of Towns interested in exploring how to share police and fire services by conducting a feasibility analysis, facilitating meetings, researching legal and administrative logistics, and creating a draft Shared Services Agreement. This work was funded through the state’s District Local Technical Assistance funding program.

TOWN ACCOUNTING PROGRAM
The Town Accounting Program provides quality municipal accounting services to 12 Towns including Ashfield, Bernardston, Buckland, Conway, Gill, Leverett, New Salem, Shelburne, Sunderland, Wendell, Whately, and Williamsburg. The program provides member Towns with qualified, professional accounting staff, access to shared software at a greatly reduced cost, and a service product completed in adherence to the requirements of Massachusetts General Laws and the Uniform Municipal Accounting System. In 2017, staff began implementation of a new fund accounting software system to replace the previous Fundware. The conversion has had its challenges but staff have worked tirelessly to address each challenge along the way.

Collective Purchasing Program - 2017 Annual Report
MUNICIPAL SERVICES

WORKSHOPS AND TRAINING SESSIONS
During 2017 the FRCOG held many workshop and training sessions for municipal officials and employees, and community volunteers.

COOPERATIVE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
- Climate Change Resiliency
- Food Safety Certification
- Healthy Aging Planning

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE
- Behavioral Analysis & Targeted Violence
- Chemical Safety
- CPR/Defibrillator/First Aid
- Emergency Dispensing Site Drills
- EOC Operations and Planning
- Family Reunification
- Getting the Word Out When It Matters: Risk Communication Skills
- Handheld GPS Unit Use
- Hazmat Operations & Safety
- Hospital Incident Command Systems
- Mass Casualty Incident Day for EMS
- Mental Health First Aid
- Pediatric Psychological First Aid
- Stop the Bleed: Tourniquet Use
- Warm Zone Operations/Triage
- Wide Area Search Methods

MUNICIPAL OFFICIAL CONTINUING EDUCATION SERIES
- Climate Change Adaptation
- Community Health Improvement Plan
- Marijuana Legislation Update and Marijuana Legalization: Municipal Roles and Options
- OPEB Trust Law
- Public Records Law Update
- Short Term Rentals from A to Z: Building Code, Health Code, and Zoning

PARTNERSHIP FOR YOUTH
- Farm to Institution for Food Service Directors
- Legislative Advocacy for Health
- LifeSkills Curriculum for Teachers
- Retail Liquor Store Certification
- Social Justice: Health Equity & Race
- TIPS Alcohol Server Certification

PLANNING, CONSERVATION, AND DEVELOPMENT
- Planning With Community Support
- Roles and Responsibilities of Planning & Zoning Boards
- Strengthening Your Town’s Agricultural Commission

A full house at the Short Term Rental workshop for Town officials.
REGIONAL PREPAREDNESS

MOHAWK AREA PUBLIC HEALTH COALITION (MAPHCO)
Staff works with local Boards of Health to prepare for public health emergencies like bioterrorism, pandemics, and zika virus. This year, MAPHCO hosted a three-part preparedness training series for local officials that covered risk communication, mastering disaster paperwork, and how best to use volunteers in an emergency. At a meeting of public health professionals at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, staff participated in discussions about what it’s like to implement measures in rural towns.

Public Health professionals met in Atlanta to discuss the challenges of emergency response in rural areas.

WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS HEALTH & MEDICAL COORDINATING COALITION (HMCC)
Staff provided 24/7 emergency support for health and medical stakeholders in western Massachusetts, including providing situational updates during severe weather. Staff created several useful documents for stakeholders over the last year that received national attention. The Introduction to the Western Massachusetts HMCC and our Duty Officer Quick Reference Guide were chosen by the Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary of Preparedness and Response to be uploaded to their web exchange for other healthcare coalitions across the U.S. to view as a best practice. Staff are also helping local community health centers, hospices, dialysis centers and others with assistance in complying with the new federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services’ emergency preparedness rule.

REGIONAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE (REPC)
In September of 2017, the REPC planned and conducted a Hazardous Materials Operations and Safety Course led by District IV Hazmat Team member Jon Davine. This 8-hour course included the proper procedures for identifying hazardous materials by placard or pipeline marker; using proper terminology to discuss chemical and physical properties of hazardous substances; identifying different vulnerabilities in containers; predicting dispersion patterns of released materials; and instructing how to properly use self-contained breathing apparatus, among other topics. This advanced course allowed the individuals to bring their knowledge back to their departments to assist in making hazmat incidents safer for the whole community and to train and advise those that could not attend.

FRANKLIN COUNTY EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION SYSTEM (FCECS)
At the request of member towns in the early 2000s, the FRCOG became owner of the Franklin County Emergency Communication System (FCECS), a 13-tower, 450 MHz radio communications network that provides emergency communications services to first responders in Franklin County towns. The system was built with $8 million of Homeland Security grant funds. The FCECS infrastructure is now 12 years old and well past its expected life of 7-10 years. Replacement parts are no longer manufactured or vendor-supported, and used parts are increasingly unavailable. The focus of the FRCOG effort in 2017 was to maintain the existing system while also figuring out how to replace the system, either by rebuilding the 450 MHz network or migrating to the Commonwealth’s 800 MHz emergency communication system. Work included assessing the ability and cost of keeping the system operational, and working with the system’s Oversight Committee and the FRCOG Finance Committee to plan for needed expenditures. The Oversight Committee and staff also considered the benefits and obstacles of the system replacement options and met with state officials and legislators to assess the best path forward.
HOMELAND SECURITY FIDUCIARY

Since 2004, the FRCOG has served as fiduciary and program manager for the Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council (WHRSAC) that oversees the State Homeland Security grant funds for the four western Massachusetts counties. WHRSAC projects are regional in scope, with a focus on building relationships between disciplines and jurisdictions, and enhancing capabilities that enable the region to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from threats and hazards, both natural and human-caused. The following is a sample of WRHSAC projects conducted in 2017.

FAMILY REUNIFICATION TEMPLATE AND TRAINING

WRHSAC assists agencies with emergency preparedness planning by providing plan templates that agencies can adopt and use as their own emergency plan. This year, WRHSAC developed the Family Reunification Plan Template. This template can be used by any agency that provides services for children, particularly schools or child care service centers, and would be implemented following an emergency incident, such as an active shooter incident, to reunite children with their families or care providers. WRHSAC conducted a series of trainings throughout the region to rollout the plan and assist municipalities and agencies in their plan development.

HYDRATION MISTING TENTS

WRHSAC has purchased a broad selection of emergency preparedness and response equipment. The equipment is strategically located at host sites throughout western Massachusetts. The items are available on a first-come, first-served basis to municipal and state agencies.

A recent highlight of this equipment and its use is the Hydration Misting Tent. These tents provide high pressure misting to prevent potential heat stress in extreme temperatures that may be experienced at planned events or emergency incidents. The tents were deployed to several public events including the Big E and the Western Mass Food Bank’s annual bike race, and they helped to reduce cases of heat stress and exhaustion. One misting tent is available in each western Massachusetts county.
REGIONAL PREPAREDNESS

ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES
WRHSAC provides special and advanced training to first responders to enhance their knowledge and increase their skills. The FRCOG, on behalf of WRHSAC, creates a welcoming learning environment and capitalizes on the group gathering to foster relationships across disciplines and jurisdictions. These relationships have proven to be as valuable as the skills gained in the trainings for enhancing the region’s response capacity to, and recovery from, both human-caused incidents and natural disasters. A sample of the trainings offered in 2017 are outlined on this page.

WIDE AREA SEARCH TRAINING
Participants were instructed in practical search methods and skills to manage searches over large affected areas. The training included exercises that mirrored real-life scenarios and participants included law enforcement, Technical Rescue, Incident Management Teams, fire, EMS, public health and Community Emergency Response Teams.

WARM ZONE TRAINING
Warm Zone Operations are specifically conducted to identify, triage and safely remove casualty victims from a hostile environment. Participants received training in cross-discipline tactical response to an active shooter or other targeted violence incident. Participants in this training included staff representing EMS, fire, police, hospitals, schools, CERT/MRC, IMT and Technical Rescue.

BEHAVIORAL ANALYSIS WORKSHOP
Over 400 participants, including first responders, schools, colleges, and private businesses, attended this workshop to gain an understanding of common profiling concepts and behavioral analysis that can be used to identify possible characteristics and warning signs of those who engage in violent attacks. Participants learned how to gather information on indicators of possible future violence risk, and how to build a Threat Management Team to manage an identified person of concern.

Training opportunities include simulated incidents with acted casualties and injuries.
ADVOCACY

An important function of the FRCOG is to advocate for issues important to the Franklin County region and its communities and residents. Throughout the year, staff testify at public hearings, provide input to locally important legislation and policy, and bring important issues to the FRCOG advisory council and member municipalities. In 2017, the FRCOG was particularly active in the work at the state level, with staff sitting on the Rural Policy Advisory Commission, and the Special Commission on Local and Regional Public Health. Staff also served as a designated expert to the Special Legislative Commission on Behavioral Health Promotion and Upstream Prevention. Additional advocacy included:

- Providing testimony on:
  - Massachusetts’ new Alcohol Task Force
  - The Special Legislative Commission on Behavioral Health Promotion and Upstream Prevention in Massachusetts
- The Cannabis Legalization Legislation that created the Cannabis Control Commission
- Draft State regulations on Cannabis prepared by the Cannabis Control Commission
- The Attorney General’s Office Task Force revising hospital community benefits regulations
- The Senate Mass Moves Public Forum
- The State legislative hearing on proposed zoning bills
- Conducting close monitoring, technical review, written filings, and meetings related to the FERC relicensing of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Facility and Turners Falls Dam.
- Reviewing the MA Department of Housing and Community Development’s proposed changes to distribution of CDBG funding and the idea of creating a rural set aside of CDBG funds.

STATE AND NATIONAL PRESENTATIONS BY FRCOG STAFF

FRCOG staff regularly present our work locally and regionally, but many are honored by being asked to share their expertise at state and national events and conferences. The following represent a sampling of the larger scale events that included presentations by FRCOG staff:

- National Collective Impact Forum, Panelist
- Parenting in the Age of Legal Marijuana, Presenter
- New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission’s 28th Annual Nonpoint Source Pollution Conference, Key Note Speaker
- The region’s history of broadband advocacy at the Senate’s Mass Moves Listening Tour
REGIONAL REPRESENTATION AND ADVOCACY

BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

FRCOG staff members sit on a variety of boards and committees representing the FRCOG, the region and Franklin County communities, either directly as part of their FRCOG responsibilities or on a volunteer basis. In 2017 these included:

- Baystate Franklin Medical Center Community Benefits Advisory Council
- Baystate Franklin Readmission Prevention Collaborative
- Baystate Franklin Community Advisory Board
- Creating Resilient Communities
- Common Capital Board of Directors
- Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts Trustees
- Community Health Center of Franklin County Board of Directors
- Department of Public Health’s Local State Advisory Committee
- Economic Development Council of Western MA Economic Development Partners, Infrastructure Committee
- Franklin County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
- Franklin County Community Development Corporation Board of Directors
- Franklin County Food Council
- Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority Board of Commissioners
- Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board Youth Services Council
- Franklin/Hampshire STOPP Tobacco Collaborative
- Franklin Region Economic Development Initiative
- Gill-Montague Community School Partnership Executive Council
- Greater Quabbin Food Alliance
- Greenfield Community College Associate Degree Nursing Program Advisory Committee
- Greenfield Safe Schools Safe Streets Steering Committee
- Local Government Workforce Skills Gap Working Committee
- Massachusetts Broadband Institute Board of Directors
- Massachusetts Department of Transportation Project Selection Advisory Council
- Massachusetts Municipal Association Policy Committee on Municipal and Regional Administration
- Massachusetts Rural Policy Advisory Commission
- Massachusetts Special Commission on Local and Regional Public Health
- Massachusetts Technical Assistance Partnership for Prevention Steering Committee
- Mayor’s Taskforce on Domestic Violence (Greenfield)
- Northwest Massachusetts Incident Management Team Executive Committee
- North Quabbin Children’s Health and Wellness System of Care
- North Quabbin Substance Abuse Prevention Task Force
- Opioid Task Force of Franklin County and North Quabbin Executive Council
- Pioneer Valley Plan for Progress Board of Trustees
- Pioneer Valley Workforce Skills Cabinet
- Rural Development, Inc. Board of Directors
- Small Town Administrators of Massachusetts
- Tri-State Fire Mutual Aid Executive Committee
- United Way of Franklin County Board of Directors
- University of Massachusetts Department of Landscape Architecture & Regional Planning Alumni Board
- Western Massachusetts Hoarding Task Force
- Western Massachusetts Public Health Association Executive Committee
- Western Massachusetts Health Equity Network Steering Committee
- WGBY Board of Tribunes

REGIONAL RELIANCE ON FEDERAL FUNDING

The FRCOG worked with Community Action to document the importance of federal funding in Franklin and Hampshire Counties. The analysis looked at the operating budgets of non-profit human service organizations, healthcare providers, higher education institutions, and municipal and regional governments to determine how heavily they rely on federal funding. The results were then compared to President Trump’s first proposed federal fiscal year 2017 budget proposal. A concerning finding was the vulnerability of Franklin and Hampshire organizations to significant cuts in federal funding because of the region’s high percent of non-profit and governmental workers. The full findings were presented to Congressman Jim McGovern, and staff from the Congressional Budget Office, with the goal of aiding their advocacy efforts in Washington.
REGIONAL REPRESENTATION AND ADVOCACY

RURAL MASSACHUSETTS:
DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS FOR THE RURAL POLICY ADVISORY COMMISSION

Created by the Legislature in 2015, the mission of the Rural Policy Advisory Commission (RPAC) is to “enhance the economic vitality of rural communities”. “Rural” is legislatively defined as municipalities with a population density of less than 500 people per square mile. The population density of Franklin County is approximately 100 people per square mile. The FRCOG conducted a demographic analysis to help define a rural area in Massachusetts. U.S. Census data was primarily used to conduct this work. Looking at population trends, age cohorts, public school enrollment and educational attainment, income, housing values, and employment and labor force, it was not surprising to learn that rural Massachusetts is not singularly defined. The western third of the state suffers from stagnant and declining population growth, while rural central Massachusetts grapples with bedroom community growth. Cape Cod and the Islands are growing older, and its year-round residents struggle to afford housing due to second-home price inflation. The FRCOG’s work, which was presented to the RPAC, the Massachusetts Legislative Rural Caucus, Congressman Neal, and the FRCOG Council, is being used to guide the work and focus of the RPAC.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

GREEN COMMUNITIES

Since the inception of the State’s Green Communities program in 2010, staff have assisted Franklin County Towns with becoming designated Green Communities and accessing funds for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects at municipal facilities. During the past year, staff worked with the Towns of Orange and Shelburne on becoming designated Green Communities, successfully helped Buckland and Leverett apply for Green Communities competitive grants, and supported nine existing Green Communities with annual reports and procurement activities for grant-approved projects. To date, 21 of the 26 towns in Franklin County are Green Communities, with a total of $3,796,660 of grant funds awarded to Franklin County Towns through the program. Also in 2017, staff secured additional State funds for the Towns of Charlemont, Colrain, Heath, and Shelburne to fund energy audits of municipal buildings, to be completed in 2018.

MOHAWK TRAIL WOODLANDS PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

The goals of the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership Project (MTWP) are to bring recognition and additional financial and technical resources to 21 municipalities in northwestern Massachusetts, primarily through a special legislative designation. The purposes of the project are to conserve forest lands and support sustainable forestry, increase economic development related to forestry and natural resource-based tourism, and improve fiscal stability and sustainability of the municipalities. Approximately 82% of the land is forested in the 21-Town region. Over the last year staff has worked to develop a draft Business Plan, identify a potential governance structure, and create State legislation that formally recognizes the partnership as the entity to advance the project’s goals.
**RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY**

**ELECTRICITY AGGREGATION**

The FRCOG was asked by members of Town Energy Committees to help organize a multi-town effort to aggregate the purchase of residential and commercial electricity. The goal of this project is for Towns to collectively control the electricity supply purchase process, and to take advantage of economies of scale to realize better pricing and/or encourage the development of renewable energy resources across New England. A number of Franklin County Towns have already aggregated their data, or are in the process of doing so. During 2018, staff will coordinate a Request for Proposal to hire an electricity aggregation consultant that will negotiate on behalf of all participating Towns, after which the Towns will assume responsibility for this project.

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**WATERSHED RESILIENCY PROJECTS**

**CLIMATE RESILIENCY PLAN FOR THE DEERFIELD RIVER WATERSHED**

As part of the Baker-Polito administration’s FY17 Community Compact Program’s Efficiency & Regionalization Grant Program, staff was awarded funding to develop a Climate Resiliency Plan for the Deerfield River watershed. This watershed includes all or portions of 14 Franklin County towns. The FRCOG chose the Deerfield River watershed for this project because of the high rate of damage to infrastructure, including homes and businesses, during Tropical Storm Irene. Many of the watershed Towns have identified climate change as a key issue to address in their multi-hazard mitigation plans. In the project referenced below (Deerfield River Watershed-Based Plan) staff looked at the impacts of climate change on natural resources and critical infrastructure. This plan expands that work even further. Over the last year staff developed a vulnerability assessment framework to examine climate change related stressors on the four key sectors of the plan: natural resources and environment; public health and welfare; critical infrastructure; and local economy and government. Staff also worked to engage watershed stakeholders in the plan development process through various outreach activities, including an interactive climate change workshop and presentations to various groups throughout the region. This watershed-scale climate resiliency plan is the first of its kind in Massachusetts. It is hoped that it can serve as a model for other watersheds in the region and across the state.

**DEERFIELD RIVER WATERSHED–BASED PLAN**

This multi-year project looked at advancing goals to preserve the green infrastructure and high quality waters of the watershed, increase the watershed’s resiliency to climate change, and identify specific implementation projects to protect high value resource and water quality areas, and improve water quality that has been degraded by stormwater runoff and other pollutants. Concluding in 2017, the plan offers recommendations for innovative conservation and water quality protection projects to restore and help maintain the high quality of the watershed’s upland tributary streams and forested areas. As part of this project, staff reviewed the land use regulations of the 14 watershed towns and included recommendations for river corridor mapping and management, and updates to floodplain bylaws. The plan emphasizes planning and resiliency strategies at the town and watershed levels. Over time, as communities within the Deerfield River Watershed align their planning and resiliency efforts, the natural resources and critical infrastructure in the communities will be protected, and the watershed as a whole will be healthier and better able to respond to extreme weather events.
RIVER CORRIDOR MAPPING AND MANAGEMENT TOOLS

Staff began work to develop a model River Corridor Mapping and Management Toolkit that will be piloted in the Deerfield River Watershed and can be adapted for use across the Commonwealth. This project will identify new river corridors in areas of the Deerfield River watershed using fluvial geomorphic principles and methods (see the South River watershed mapping example to the right). Staff will also develop two river corridor protection tools: a River Corridor Protection Zoning Overlay District and a River Corridor Easement. The goal of the project is to provide municipalities, riverine landowners, land trusts, and others with powerful tools to improve ecological function, increase flood resiliency, reduce downstream flooding and sediment loading, better protect infrastructure against erosion, and increase watershed resiliency to future climate change. This project builds on the work that was previously completed by the FRCOG in 2016 for the South River watershed.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLANS

A current Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) that has been approved by the MA Division of Conservation Services (DCS) establishes a Town’s eligibility for state grants through DCS, such as MA Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) grants and MA Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) grants, as well as for other potential grant sources. OSRP plans include a 7-Year Action Plan that identifies priorities for open space protection and recreational opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities, and provides current data and up-to-date maps to assist in local planning efforts. In 2017, staff worked with local committees in Ashfield, Gill, Erving, Leverett, and Montague to update their existing OSRPs.

TRI-TOWN COMMUNITY FOOD ASSESSMENT

FRCOG staff continued work on the Tri-Town Community Food Assessment, a project designed to strengthen the local food system and ramp up the amount of food being grown or raised, and purchased and consumed locally. A survey of area residents found a significant number want to buy more locally grown food in their towns – such as apples, berries, eggs and cider, to name a few. The survey also identified several small growers who are interested in increasing their production of food that is in demand. A local farm and food resource directory was identified by the survey as one tool that could help connect local producers and consumers. FRCOG staff developed the resource directory which will be updated and maintained by Agricultural Commission members. Findings from the project were used to develop a series of infographic posters for the Towns of Charlemont, Colrain and Heath that were used at the 100th Anniversary of the Heath Fair to reach a large audience and to educate the public on their local food system.

Findings from the Tri-Town Food Assessment Survey were included in infographic posters.
TRANSPORTATION

BICYCLE AND ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION ADVOCACY
The FRCOG participated in 2017 Baystate Bike Week activities by hosting approximately 30 people at a breakfast for bicyclists on May 16th. The event was a great opportunity for bicyclists to network with one another, and for staff to discuss additional needs for bicycle infrastructure with the biking community. Participants had the opportunity to learn how to load bikes onto FRTA buses, and lively discussions took place on where needed bicycle facilities should be located and what challenges people face in getting around by bike.

BICYCLE PARKING PROGRAM
In 2017, staff administered a program to provide free bicycle racks to our member communities. This opportunity was made possible through a contract with MassDOT, which reimbursed the FRCOG for the cost of bike racks with state and federal transportation funding. The FRCOG partnered with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council in Boston and 13 other agencies across the Commonwealth to create a joint purchasing program that allowed the FRCOG to purchase bike racks at a significant discount. The FRCOG was able to provide 54 new bike racks of varying sizes to 11 participating towns: Ashfield, Bernardston, Erving, Gill, Greenfield, Heath, Montague, New Salem, Northfield, Rowe and Warwick.

BICYCLE TOURISM
Staff continued work on development of a regional program to promote bicycling for tourism in Franklin County. Building on previous research, staff reached out to numerous organization to identify bicycle related resources and events in our local area. In addition, staff collected data on the number of participants in several of the bicycling events that took place in the region and where the cyclists traveled from to participate. An on-line survey to participants of several events was developed and distributed in order to quantify their spending potential, and to identify opportunities for marketing local businesses. In addition, staff worked to develop guidelines for a Bicycle Friendly Business Program that will encourage bicyclists to visit businesses with special accommodations for riders. This work will continue in the coming year.

Bicyclists take a break from their ride at the Bridge of Flowers in Shelburne Falls.

New bicycle rack in Montague Center.
TRANSPORTATION

COMPLETE STREETS FUNDING PROGRAM
Staff helped Towns participate in MassDOT’s Complete Streets funding program. Complete Streets are roads that are accessible to all modes of travel and types of user, including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders and drivers of varied ages and abilities. Several Towns were provided with technical assistance on how to participate in the Complete Streets funding program. In particular, over the last year staff assisted Buckland, Colrain, Montague and Whately with various levels of Complete Streets planning, and is available to help other communities in the coming year.

COMPLETE STREETS ASSESSMENTS AT BUS STOPS
Staff also assessed bus stops in Franklin County for Complete Streets compatibility and made recommendations for improvements that will make the transit experience more comfortable and safe. Five bus stop locations were evaluated and suggestions were made on how to improve the links for transit riders as they leave the bus and walk, bicycle or drive to other places. The project assessed 3 bus stops in Greenfield, 1 in Montague, and 1 in Orange. Transit is an important component of a multimodal system and livable community. Most transit trips begin or end with a walk or bicycle ride. Therefore, improving the road conditions for all modes of transportation near bus stops is essential to providing better and safer transportation services.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES
Staff examined the regional demand for public electric vehicle charging stations in Franklin County. There are currently eight charging stations located around the County, with most located in Greenfield. Staff found that all charging stations are frequently used and surveys of electric vehicle owners show that there is a clear demand for additional charging stations in Franklin County, particularly in unserved areas along Route 2.

An electric vehicle charging station in use in Greenfield.
TRANSPORTATION

MAHICAN-MOHAWK TRAIL MAPPING

The FRCOG is in the final stage of an update to the map of the Mahican-Mohawk Trail, a long-distance trail that will connect the Connecticut River with the Hudson River. In our area it travels through Deerfield, Conway, Shelburne, Buckland, and Charlemont. Many sections are already complete and in use, while others are in the planning stages. This update was a collaborative effort between numerous groups including state agencies, non-profits, utility companies, volunteers and local residents. Look for a copy of the updated map to be available at visitor centers and trailheads in the near future.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Staff developed a guide book aimed at Town DPWs/Highway Departments to introduce Green Infrastructure (GI) stormwater management concepts and to encourage use of GI in roadway and parking lot projects. In many communities, existing stormwater infrastructure is aging, expensive to maintain, and inadequate to handle the heavier rainfalls our region is experiencing due to climate change. This leads to localized flooding and negative impacts to roads, bridges, property, and water quality. The guide outlines the benefits of integrating GI into public projects to better manage and clean stormwater runoff from roads, sidewalks, and parking lots, and provides case studies of GI projects in Franklin County towns. Bioretention areas, street trees, vegetated swales, reduction of impervious surfaces, and permeable pavement are some of the techniques used to manage stormwater from roadways.

PARK(ING) DAY

The FRCOG helped host a Park(ING) Day event in Franklin County last Fall for the fifth consecutive year. Staff collaborated with the Greenfield Local Cultural Council (GLCC) and the Town of Greenfield to take over parking spaces in downtown Greenfield and convert them into temporary public parks to promote local projects and alternative transportation activities in Franklin County. The event promoted various FRCOG’s projects, the Town’s Complete Streets program, and the GLCC’s current grant cycle.

A bio-swale in a Greenfield parking lot collects and filters stormwater runoff before it enters the storm drain.

FRCOG staff speak with residents during PARK(ing) Day.

A bio-swale in a Greenfield parking lot collects and filters stormwater runoff before it enters the storm drain.
PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT
The FRCOG inspects the pavement condition of all Federal Aid roadways under Town jurisdiction in Franklin County on a three-year rolling schedule. Roadways are visually surveyed and the results are input into the RoadManager GPMS Pavement Management System (PMS). The PMS supports pavement condition analysis as well as forecasting repair scenarios and costs. This information can be used by Towns to plan cost-effective pavement repair strategies. In 2017, the FRCOG surveyed 20 miles of roadway in Erving, Northfield and Warwick.

TRANSPORTATION

TRAFFIC COUNTING
In 2017, staff conducted 41 traffic volume counts (including vehicle classification and speed counts) in the following towns: Ashfield, Bernardston, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Gill, Greenfield, Hawley, Leverett, Leyden, Monroe, Montague, New Salem, Northfield, Rowe, Sunderland, Warwick, Wendell and Whately. Each year traffic counts are offered free of charge to Franklin County member municipalities on a first-come, first-served basis. The FRCOG now also has equipment that is able to count bicyclists, as well as motor vehicles, on the same segment of roadway. Traffic counts are often used by municipalities for planning purposes and grant applications. Information on all past traffic counts can be obtained by contacting the transportation planning program.

PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT
The FRCOG inspects the pavement condition of all Federal Aid roadways under Town jurisdiction in Franklin County on a three-year rolling schedule. Roadways are visually surveyed and the results are input into the RoadManager GPMS Pavement Management System (PMS). The PMS supports pavement condition analysis as well as forecasting repair scenarios and costs. This information can be used by Towns to plan cost-effective pavement repair strategies. In 2017, the FRCOG surveyed 20 miles of roadway in Erving, Northfield and Warwick.

TRANSPORTATION

TRANSIT PLANNING
Staff continued to partner with the Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) in a variety of ways to broaden public outreach efforts, particularly related to fixed route changes to schedules and routes. Staff created all new bus schedules, brochures, and maps for the FRTA to distribute, and assisted in advertising the new changes.

Staff also spearheaded work with the FRTA and the Franklin County Opioid Task Force to plan for and implement the Freedoms Shuttle and Bus Pass that assists individuals in treatment and recovery from substance abuse disorders in accessing treatment and recovery services. The Shuttle provides service to eligible individuals in West County and the Bus Pass is available to all eligible individuals to use the fixed route system to access treatment services.
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Stanley Garland

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CHARLEMONTE
Toby Gould, Beth Bandy

COLRAIN
Kevin Fox, Eileen Savageau

CONWAY
John O’Rourke, Council Chair

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ERVING
William Bembury, Bryan Smith

GILL
Greg Snedeker

GREENFIELD
William Martin, Mark Smith

HAWLEY
Hassain Hamdan, John Sears, Robert Root

HEATH
Brian DeVriese

LEVERETT
Gordon Fretwell, Beth Adams

LEYDEN
Michele Giarusso, Bill Glabach

MONROE
David Nash, Carla Davis

MONTAGUE
Richard Kaklewicz, Steve Ellis

NEW SALEM
Wayne Hachey

NORTHFIELD
Brian Noble, Julia Blyth

ORANGE
Diana Schindler, Ryan Mailloux

ROWE
Marilyn Wilson, Jennifer Morse, Janice Boudreau

SHELBURNE
Joe Iudd, John Payne, Andrew Baker, Robert Manners

SHUTESBURY
Ellen McKay, Michael DeChiara

SUNDERLAND
Thomas Fydenkevez, David Pierce

WARWICK
Dawn Magi, Council Vice Chair, Lawrence Pruyne

WENDELL
Daniel Keller, Michale Idoine

WHATELEY
Lynn Sibley, Brian Domina

REGIONALLY ELECTED
Jay DiPucchio

REGIONALLY ELECTED
Bill Perlman

FRANKLIN REGIONAL PLANNING BOARD REP
Sam Lovejoy, James Basford

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Coalition Coordinator

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Jessica Atwood
Economic Development Program Manager

Patricia Auchard
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Glen Ayers
Regional Health Agent

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Rebekkah Boyd
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Chris Brothers
FCCIP Online Permit Administrator

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Assistant Finance Director

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Building Commissioner

Herb Hohengasser
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Town Accountant

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Joe Markarian
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Electrical Inspector

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Public Health and Transportation Planner

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Stacey Mousseau
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Cathryn Thomas
Town Accountant Assistant

Jeanette Voas
Partnership for Youth Evaluation Coordinator

Phoebe Walker
Director of Community Services

Lisa White
Regional Public Health Nurse

Andrea Woods
Chief Procurement Officer
COLLECTIVE BIDDING & PURCHASING PROGRAM

- Buckland contracted with the FRCOG to receive cooperative bid pricing for up to 24 different Highway Products and Services. It was estimated that the total highway needs for FY18 is $401,872.
- Buckland participated in the Diesel Fuel bid.
- Buckland participated in the Elevator Maintenance collective contract.
- Buckland participated in the Fire Alarm Testing and Maintenance contract.

COOPERATIVE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE HEALTH DISTRICT

The Town is a comprehensive member of the CPHS, a health district based at the Franklin Regional Council of Governments. CPHS activities in Buckland during 2017 included:

- Staff assisted with Title-5 (septic) related activities including 6 Soil Evaluations for septic systems, 6 septic system plan reviews including site visits and final inspections of installations, witnessing 12 Title-5 Inspections prior to property transfer, issuing Local Upgrade Approvals and DSCP (septic) permits, and preparing Certificates of Compliance.
- Staff conducted 18 retail food inspections and 3 summer camp inspections, permitted 3 wells, and continued to assist Buckland businesses and residents with Sanitary Code compliance.
- Staff attended 12 regular Board of Health meetings.
- Staff held 11 monthly walk-in wellness clinics at the Senior Center making 109 visits with 36 individual clients. The Nurse worked collaboratively with Shelburne Senior Center staff to address resident needs arising over the year, making home visits as needed.
- Staff offered residents pill sorters, medication lock boxes, mercury thermometer collection and exchange, and sharps disposal and container exchange. One hundred sixteen (116) sharps containers and 6 thermometers were exchanged for CPHS residents over the year.
- Staff supported two “Planning Together for Healthy Aging” community conversations held at the Senior Center in Shelburne Falls, as well as other educational discussions and trainings for Buckland elders.
- Staff completed state-mandated infectious disease investigations, reporting and monitoring of 220 CPHS district cases, 23 of which were from Buckland. Four (4) Buckland cases required further in-depth investigation and reporting.
- Staff conducted a flu clinic at the Shelburne Senior Center that vaccinated 96 area residents, and flu clinic emergency dispensing site drill for Ashfield, Buckland, Colrain and Shelburne held at the Mohawk Trail Regional School that vaccinated 76 area residents.

FRANKLIN COUNTY COOPERATIVE INSPECTION PROGRAM

- Staff issued 117 building permits, 59 electrical permits & 53 plumbing/gas permits for Buckland in 2017. Nineteen (19) Certificates of Inspection were issued.

PARTNERSHIP FOR YOUTH

- Staff conducted a Teen Health Survey to assess teen attitudes and behavior among middle and high school students. Staff reported to Mohawk Trail Regional School administrators on results from 156 Mohawk students, representing 72% of the 8th, 10th, and 12th grade classes. Survey data meets federal requirements for the school and is valuable for grant-writing and program planning.
- Staff provided a Mass in Motion Active Living mini-grant to the Buckland Library for the purchase of snowshoes that patrons may borrow through library lending.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

- Staff began work on the development of a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan.
- Staff conducted a Slum and Blight Study in downtown Shelburne Falls to determine if the area is eligible for CDBG funding.
- Staff held a public information session and developed design alternatives for the Buckland Salmon Falls parking lot/rail yard in collaboration with the Conway School of Landscape Design.
- Staff assisted the FRTA with route and schedule changes for the fixed route system.
- Staff worked with the FRTA to establish the Freedoms Shuttle and Bus Pass that assists individuals in treatment and recovery for substance abuse in accessing support services. The shuttle serves the towns of Ashfield, Buckland, and Conway.
- Staff worked with the Franklin Land Trust to protect natural and scenic land on the Route 112 and Mohawk Trail Scenic Byways with funding provided through the National Scenic Byway Program.
• Staff assisted Buckland with a Green Communities competitive grant application for weatherization and lighting upgrades at the Police Station. Buckland was awarded the grant in the amount of $73,269. FRCOG staff assisted with grant administration.

• Staff assisted the Town Administrator with completing the FY17 Green Communities Annual Report.

• Staff conducted a requested traffic count on North Street as part of the regional Traffic Counting Program.

• Staff provided technical assistance to the Planning Board regarding recreational marijuana legislation and zoning.

• Staff pursued State Legislation to create a Special Designation for the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership region covering 11 West County towns, including Buckland, to bring additional financial and technical resources to support natural resource based economic development, forest conservation & municipal financial sustainability.

REGIONAL PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM

• Four Citizen Corps volunteers provided a total of 12.5 hours of assistance to the flu clinic for the Mohawk region.

• The Franklin County Citizen Corps program sponsored a full scale regional sheltering exercise at the Mohawk Trail Regional High School in March. Thirty-seven (37) people participated, including members of the Citizen Corps team, ham radio operators, and public health and public safety officials from Ashfield, Buckland, Heath, and Shelburne.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

• As part of the Community Compact Financial Best Practices, staff worked with the Town Administrator to develop budget documents including new spreadsheets to present and project fiscal year revenues and expenses.

• Staff organized and facilitated educational information meetings for members of Town energy committees, including presenting information on various topics and conducting follow-up communication.

TOWN ACCOUNTING PROGRAM

• Staff produced biweekly vendor warrants, and provided monthly budget reports to all officials and department heads.

• At year end, staff completed Free Cash certification, and Schedule A was submitted. In addition, staff provided assistance in completing the Recap for tax rate submission.

• Customized reports for committees and departments were developed and distributed.

• Staff assisted with the annual audit.

• All accounting data was accessible over a secure internet connection to a server at the FRCOG office. Staff completed backups daily and there was no unscheduled down time.

WORKSHOPS & TRAINING

The following list represents the FRCOG workshops and training sessions that Buckland public officials, staff, and residents attended, and the number in attendance.

Cooperative Public Health Service
  Climate Change Resiliency — 7
  Food Safety Certification — 7
  Healthy Aging Planning — 2

Emergency Preparedness & Response
  Emergency Dispensing Site Drills — 1
  Hazmat Operations & Safety — 1

Municipal Official Continuing Education Series
  Climate Change Adaptation — 5
  Community Health Improvement Plan— 1
  Marijuana Legalization: Municipal Roles and Options — 2
  Marijuana Legislation Update — 1
  OPEB Trust Law — 2
  Public Records Law Update — 1
  Short Term Rentals from A to Z: Building Code, Health Code, and Zoning — 4

Partnership for Youth
  Retail Liquor Store Certification — 2
  Social Justice: Health Equity & Race — 2 plus one from the Mohawk Trail Regional School District
  TIPS Alcohol Server Certification — 2
John W. Olver Transit Center
12 Olive Street, Suite 2
Greenfield, MA 01301

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