



# Franklin Regional Council of Governments

## Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee

Date:	December 7, 2016
Time:	3:30 p.m.
Location:	12 Olive Street, Greenfield, MA
Duration:	1.5 hours
Facilitator:	Gary Dillensneider, Chair

### CEDS Committee Attendees, Appointing Entity:

- MJ Adams, Town of Greenfield alternate
- Patricia Crosby, Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board
- Gary Dillensneider, Committee Chair, Franklin County Community Development Corporation
- Linda Dunlavy, FRCOG Executive Committee
- Martha Field, FRCOG Executive Committee
- Ann Hamilton, Franklin County Chamber of Commerce
- Tom Hutcheson, Franklin Regional Planning Board
- Carmela Lanza Weil, Greater Shelburne Falls Area Business Association
- Nan Riebschlaeger, Town of Wendell
- Mark Smith, Franklin Regional Planning Board

### FRCOG Staff:

- Jessica Atwood, Economic Development Program Manager
- Ryan Clary, Senior GIS Specialist
- Alyssa Larose, Land Use Planner
- Tracy Rogers, Regional Preparedness Program Manager
- Peggy Sloan, Director of Planning and Development

### Guests

- Lauren Mattison, UMass Center for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

### **1 – Welcome and Introductions: Gary Dillensneider, Chair**

The meeting was called to order at 3:32 p.m. by Chair G. Dillensneider. A round of introductions followed. The vote to approve the minutes from October 5, 2016 was postponed for a lack of a quorum.

### **2 – Vote to approve minutes from October 5, 2016**

At 4:11 p.m., N. Riebschlaeger MOVED to approve the October 5, 2016 minutes. T. Hutcheson SECONDED. The motion PASSED unanimously.

### **3 – Discussion of CEDS Program updates, including but not limited to: Brownfields Program; Tri-State Initiative**

Jessica Atwood provided an update on the FRCOG Brownfields Program's current project, the former Ramage Paper Mill complex in Monroe. The focus of the project is on the wooden structure adjacent to the Deerfield River. The structure had been in private ownership, but the absentee owner had not paid taxes since 1999 and was unresponsive to Town correspondence, including an order of demolition from the Monroe Board of Health this past summer. In order for the Town to take advantage of FRCOG Brownfields Program funding, it had to take ownership of the structure, which it did by eminent domain in November. An assessment of contaminants had previously been completed, which found that the structure contained hazardous substances including asbestos and lead. Of particular concern is the location of the structure in relation to the river access point, which is located directly across the river from the site. It provides access for the whitewater rafting companies, as well as individual kayakers and anglers.

Next steps for the site are to clean up the hazardous substances, demolish the structure, secure the site, and construct a small public park. The FRCOG's EPA contract for the Brownfields Clean-up Revolving Loan Fund & Subgrant (RLF) has been closed out, so the \$100,000 Subgrant funding for this project is coming from the RLF's program income. Other funding sources include a \$30,000 grant from TransCanada, \$150,000 from the MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) for building demolition and securing the site, and another \$370,000 from EEA to construct the public park. Brownfields funds can only be used for clean-up activities, not demolition, so the EEA grant was key. EEA invested in the project because the consequence of the building falling into the river would be terrible for both environmental reasons and for economic reasons given the importance of the rafting industry in the region. EEA is working on preliminary designs for the park, and will gather public input before construction begins after July 1, 2017. The current conceptual design doesn't force any particular outcome for the rest of the site, which still needs to be figured out.

Atwood stated that the Town of Monroe has worked very hard on this project, and that it is a big challenge for a small town to take on. C. Lanza Weil asked about the process for getting the grants from EEA. Peggy Sloan answered that the FRCOG had been discussing the project with EEA to explore funding opportunities. In addition, the region's leaders in the rafting industry strongly advocated EEA Secretary Beaton about the importance of the project. EEA determined they could fund the demolition if they could also build a park. Demolition funding is very difficult to get. Kurt Gaertner at EEA spoke with Secretary Beaton about the project, and they decided to step in and fill the funding gap.

A question was asked about when public input will be solicited for the park? Atwood answered that this would probably happen in the spring. Lanza Weil asked if artists are being included in the design process for the park. Sloan answered that she is unsure, but that the design is limited because of its location in a floodplain and critical habitat area. There was a comment that the park could include an interpretive sign about the history of the mill, to educate people. It was noted that this area is used a lot in the summer.

A question was asked whether the Town will take over the remainder of the mill buildings. Atwood answered that the Town is not planning on it at this time. FRCOG is applying for a new brownfields grant, and is hoping to do additional assessments on the site and create a potential reuse plan. MJ

Adams asked what level of economic activity is generated at the river launching site. Atwood answered that she would like to study this more and collect data to help leverage funds and encourage redevelopment. Adams commended the FRCOG for furthering this project via the TA Connect program. Atwood responded that it was helpful to have multi-agency support at the State level. Everyone at the State level knew about the project. It helps tell the story of what it is like in our region.

Atwood continued with program updates. The FRCOG Regional Brownfields Program has provided funding to assess over 60 sites in 19 towns. The current hazardous substance grant has been spent down, and it is hoped that the petroleum grant will be spent down within the next few months. The program has leveraged over \$25 million in redevelopment, with another \$10.5 million pending. An example are the three buildings in Millers Falls currently undergoing redevelopment into a laundromat, commercial and office space, with residences on the upper floors. The FRCOG is applying for a \$200,000 EPA hazardous substance assessment grant.

Linda Dunlavy presented information about the Rural Policy Advisory Commission. The Commission was created by the State legislature in 2015, with a mission to enhance the economic vitality of rural communities. "Rural" is defined by the legislation as communities under 500 people per square mile. In the Commonwealth, 170 of 351 cities and towns meet this definition. The state's rural communities make up 13% of the population, the equivalent of Boston, Worcester and Lexington combined. If you consider the economic impact of Boston, the potential economic impact of rural areas shouldn't be undervalued.

The Commission will study data related to rural communities in the areas of infrastructure, economic development, housing, and workforce and population, and will advise on policy, ensuring rural areas are receiving their fair share of investment. Fourteen members are appointed to the Commission, including a representative from each impacted Regional Planning Agency, a House and Senate appointment, and a DHCD appointment. Dunlavy is the FRCOG's appointed representative, and has been elected treasurer, though there is no budget at this time. Atwood and Ryan Clary, FRCOG Senior GIS Specialist, have been mapping data for the Commission. Because the definition of rural is so broad, Dunlavy explained that they assumed they would see a picture of two rurals in Massachusetts. To some extent this is true. In the western part of the state, rural communities have a greater decline in population, have older populations, and have lower household incomes and lower home values than eastern rural towns. Clary demonstrated how mapping the data can reveal these differences visually. A. Hamilton asked if trends can be mapped and analyzed. Atwood answered that they have not done that yet, but may in the future.

Dunlavy explained that when the different available services, such as education, broadband, career centers, transit, etc. are overlaid on the maps, you can begin to see gaps in services. P. Crosby noted that as the unemployment rate decreases, career centers are just trying to stay open. Closures could really impact people's ability to access services. Dunlavy stated that the Commission has been broken into four subcommittees to address each topic area. Each subcommittee has been asked to come up with one actionable item to present to the full Commission in early January. Dunlavy is on the Economic Development and Demographics and Population subcommittees. One thing the Economic Development subcommittee has talked about is to look at where service centers should be created or expanded. They are also looking at a rural anchor community concept, where village centers could have more enhanced commercial activity except for some issue in capacity. An example is Charlemont, which has a large amount of visitors but has no public water system, which hinders the ability to expand commercial activity. An overarching issue is to work with MassDEP to have more

innovative public water and sewer technologies available that can help village centers grow in rural areas. They are also trying to come up with recommendations that would benefit all of the state, such as making regulations fair for large and small retailers. Finally they are looking at how to help volunteer fire departments recruit and maintain volunteers. Dunlavy noted they are working with the FHREB on the economic development pieces.

Atwood continued the updates. She noted that the EDA i6 Challenge grant application led by the Franklin County CDC did not get an award. An application through UMass to lead a workshop in Greenfield on encouraging more public art is pending. Upcoming events include a FRCOG workshop on municipal farmland leasing and protection, and a New Market Tax Credit (NMTC) workshop lead by MassDevelopment sponsored by the Town of Greenfield and the FRCOG. NMTC are a financing tool for large investment projects in eligible census tracts.

#### **4 – Introduction to the UMASS Center for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (CEERE), and their programs to help manufacturers and food and beverage producers.**

At 4:12 p.m. Atwood introduced Lauren Mattison of the UMass CEERE to speak about free technical assistance available for renewable energy and energy efficiency. Mattison provided an overview of the Center, which is housed in the Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering at UMass Amherst. The Center was founded in 1997 and conducts research, publishes case studies, and provides technical assistance, public workshops, and training for engineering students. The Center is closely affiliated with the UMass Clean Energy Extension, founded in 2015 with a grant from MA DOER. The Extension is focused more on working in the state, while the Center covers all of New England and New York for certain programs.

The Center's program for manufacturing and water/wastewater treatment facilities is the oldest U.S. Department of Energy Industrial Assessment Center program. The program provides free assessments and impartial recommendations to reduce energy and resource costs related to electricity, fuel, water, and waste. The program is unique in that it covers all fuels, not just specific types. The program has completed almost 800 assessments since 1984, 31 in Franklin County. Small to mid-size manufacturing facilities and water / wastewater treatment facilities (including municipally-owned facilities) are eligible. The program targets this size facility because there is often significant energy savings potential but limited staff capacity to handle it. The program's goals are to save energy and resources, reduce the cost of manufacturing, and to train students to work in the energy efficiency/renewable energy field.

The assessment process begins with analysis of energy and water bills, followed by an on-site visit to measure actual energy use and performance of equipment. A report is then created detailing recommendations including estimates for implementation and projected cost savings. Assessments in two Franklin County manufacturing facilities resulted in annual cost savings of \$80,000 with a 3 month payback at one facility, and annual savings of \$71,000 with less than a month payback period at another facility. Typical recommendations include turning off equipment not in use, using variable frequency drives to adjust motor speeds to meet current needs, and applying for the manufacturing tax exemption on energy bills. Water and wastewater treatment facility recommendations range from capital investments, to better controls, to adjustments in operation to save energy.

Mattison continued her presentation, speaking next about the food and beverage business program. This is a new initiative to support energy and environmental measures in food and beverage processing, service, retailing, etc. It is a joint effort of UMass Amherst, UMass Lowell, state and federal agencies with funding from a U.S. EPA grant. The initiative brings together existing assistance programs and organizations to offer more cohesive support for businesses. So far two workshops have been held, with the next scheduled in the spring in eastern Massachusetts. The workshops provide opportunity for peer to peer interaction. The program also provides one on one support, and is actively seeking businesses to participate. Initially the program was targeting larger food processing companies, but smaller businesses have come to the workshops and found them helpful. A question was asked whether farmers would be eligible. Mattison answered that farmers who are doing some kind of food processing could benefit from the program. Anyone can attend the workshops if they think it will be beneficial. Any business that uses energy, cleaning and sanitizing products, and generates waste, could be interested. A question was asked whether breweries had participated. Mattison said no, but that she would love to have breweries take advantage of the program.

Mattison presented an overview of support provided to municipalities through the UMass Clean Energy Extension, including reviews of clean energy opportunities, and Green Communities support. They have also published case studies on specific technologies, such as wood pellet boilers, as well as towns that have reached their energy reduction goals. N. Riebschlaeger asked whether the extension service has helped towns trying to do community solar. Mattison answered no, but that is something they could do. They can also help towns looking to put solar on town-owned land.

Mattison continued with information on a combined heat and power (CHP) program available. CHP refers to joint generation and use of electricity and thermal energy, which typically doubles energy efficiency. It also adds some reliability for buildings that can continue to generate power even if the grid is down. The program provides assistance for any type of facility, including multi-family residential, interested in installing CHP. A free initial screening is completed, and if CHP is pursued, the program can provide assistance through the process. P. Sloan asked if any manufacturers in the region use CHP. Mattison said yes, and she hopes to write a case study about the facility. She noted that CHP makes the most sense for facilities that have a high demand for heat year round. A question was asked whether the program provides assistance with district heating. Mattison replied yes. A question was asked whether CHP can be used for cooling as well as heating. Mattison said yes, sometimes it is done for larger facilities.

A question was asked how the program gets clients. Mattison replied that she does presentations, and also word of mouth. Staff capacity at the Center is limited, however currently they are doing more outreach and are interested in ideas for potential clients. A question was asked whether the Center can work with manufacturers who are moving into the area. Mattison said yes for the CHP program, but for the assessment programs, it needs to be an existing facility. The UMass Clean Energy Extension can work with cities and towns on new building projects. A question was asked about working with regional school districts. Mattison said she believed the extension service could work with regional school districts. It is a new program that is still trying to find its niche.

## **5 – Review of Emergency Preparedness Planning Program activities in Franklin County, and a discussion on how it may relate to regional economic resiliency planning.**

At 4:45 p.m., Atwood stated that the CEDS Committee has talked about resiliency related to economic shock, including natural disasters or major business closures. She introduced Tracy Rogers, FRCOG Regional Preparedness Program Manager, to talk about programs in the region that may intersect with economic resiliency planning. Rogers explained that a lot of the work her program does is related to impacts from climate change and the results of extreme weather. Current work includes the Regional Emergency Planning Committee (REPC), which focuses on hazardous materials but also all hazards. FRCOG also owns and maintains a system of radio towers across the county that allows emergency personnel to communicate. Additionally, there are several programs that encompass all four western Massachusetts counties, including the Health and Medical Coordination Coalition (HMCC) and Homeland Security activities.

Current emergency preparedness projects include conducting exercises for potential hazardous materials incidences. A project in the Deerfield River watershed is addressing erosion issues. Every town in Franklin County has a Hazard Mitigation Plan, which identifies potential hazards and projects to mitigate future damage. The Community Organizations Active in Disasters (COAD) project brings together non-profits that want to help out after a disaster, like the food bank, churches, etc. The COAD can also act as a way for the Chamber of Commerce and business community to link into what is happening during a disaster. Staff have worked on the buy local campaign and increasing storage at the Franklin County CDC for agri-businesses. The HMCC is addressing how to deal with an influx in patients during a health crisis. COSTEP is a project to help cultural resources like libraries back up and store archives properly.

Ideas for future projects include assisting businesses with Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP), which outlines what to do if staff are out due to the flu to dealing with the impact of a natural disaster. Businesses should also have emergency action plans that cover how to evacuate. These are services that FRCOG could provide in the future, but currently there is no funding available. Exercising emergency plans and conducting a building vulnerability analysis to better prepare for a natural disaster, providing technical assistance for agricultural businesses with CISA, and helping businesses increase inventory supplies and diversify inventory suppliers are other possible future activities.

Atwood stated that since Tropical Storm Irene, there have been discussions at the local level of how to get business leaders into the communication loop during a disaster. Atwood asked Rogers if she had heard of other communities doing something similar to communicate with the business community. Rogers answered that every business should touch base with their community's Emergency Management Director (EMD) to build a relationship.

T. Hutcheson stated he liked the COOP concept, and would like to have some best practices. He noted that Conway had an Emergency Management Team meeting the previous night and discussed the issue of farms with dairy herds or horses, where the owners are not likely to leave their animals behind during an emergency. Rogers answered that she has heard about farmers from hilly areas and valleys coordinating for taking in other herds in emergencies, but there can be issues with mixing herds. The Franklin County Fairgrounds has been discussed as a location for keeping livestock during an emergency, but there is a lot to work through.

P. Crosby said that after Tropical Storm Irene, the region saw sudden job losses and the Career Center did not know what to do. Some people live paycheck to paycheck, and this was a big issue. We now know that there is emergency unemployment assistance if people can get to an employment office.

Rogers noted that cyber security is also an increasing threat, but that she hasn't done much in that area yet. P. Sloan asked whether any projects have looked into back-up electric systems for downtowns or facilities. Rogers answered that Springfield is trying to create emergency "solar islands" so that some places could be open for basic necessities. FRCOG is not yet involved with this type of project but are interested. L. Mattison noted that the State has a new initiative for energy storage, and a "solar island" could be a good demonstration project. An RFP is coming out soon to fund demonstration projects. Combine Heat and Power can also help with power outages. N. Reibschalger responded that the mini-grid concept is similar, and in Wendell, the whole town could be powered with a small solar facility.

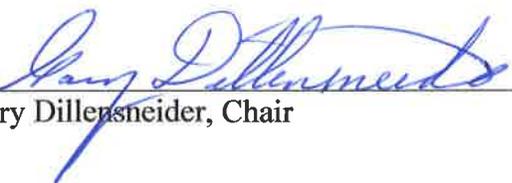
A. Hamilton asked about the chain of command in an emergency, in regards to FEMA and MEMA and the local officials. She commented that it is important for someone who knows the area to be running things. Rogers responded that the local officials are in charge. She stated that FEMA has more experience, but local knowledge can get lost with staff changes. T. Hutcheson noted that local officials are generally in control during the first 48 hours, and that it is important for towns and businesses to be able to get through that initial period. Rogers added that it is good if employees have emergency plans for their families as well. A. Hamilton asked if there are volunteers available to help with tree clearing and similar activities. Rogers said that some of the religious organizations have teams that can be brought in for that. Some towns also have community response teams.

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

G. Dillensneider asked if there is any other business. A question whether there are any updates on the Ecovation project was asked. Atwood responded not at this time.

Dillensneider asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. N. Riebschlaeger **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 5:05 p.m. P. Crosby **SECONDED** the motion. The motion **PASSED**.

Respectfully submitted by:

  
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Gary Dillensneider, Chair