



Council Chair Update

Celebration for Steve Kulik

Please mark your calendar and come to an event for and with Steve Kulik celebrating his 25 years as Representative of the First Franklin District and a well-earned retirement. The party will be on Tuesday, November 13th from 5:30 to 8:00 at the GCC Dining Commons. The event will be free and will include food, drink and entertainment.

Next Council Meetings:

January 24, 2019

April 17, 2019

Meetings are held in the Transit Center.

Executive Committee Update

Summary of Executive Committee Activities This Quarter

- Agreed that FRCOG staff should draft a letter supporting the Connecticut River Conservancy's recent recommendations that an alternatives analysis for the Northfield Pumped Storage Facility, including use of a closed loop system, should be conducted. The letter will also expand upon the need for additional recreational facilities on the river and accessible access to the river and related facilities.
- Discussed sections of the FRCOG's lease with the FRTA in an effort to reach a better understanding of the FRCOG's long-term financial obligations and to determine if renegotiation or clarification of the lease is necessary. Instructed the Executive Director to hire an attorney with no pre-existing history with either organization or the lease to review and interpret the lease and determine next steps.
- At their October meeting the Executive Committee will discuss FY20 budget priorities and get an update on the status of the FCECS.

Finance Committee Update

Fiscal Review and Budget Development Schedule

The Fiscal Review for FY29 Budget Development has been sent to members in advance. It will be reviewed and discussed at the Council meeting. Its purpose is to provide Council members with a good understanding of the fiscal operations of the FRCOG in advance of FY20 budget development. At the January Council meeting, members will be asked to endorse the budget. All Council members are welcome to attend Finance Committee meetings, especially during budget development. The meeting schedule is listed in the front of the Fiscal Review.

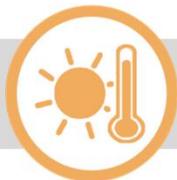


Advocacy

Executive Director Update

Advocacy, Boards, Commissions and Committees

- Linda D. served on the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative Executive Director Search Committee.
- Staff advocated for changes to the Housing Choice Initiative and advocated for the Commonwealth to provide more resources to Franklin County for housing development capacity.
- Staff strategized with other Franklin County regional service organizations about how the region can reverse declining population projections by concerted, proactive and coordinated strategy. Once more fully developed, the ideas will be presented to the Council and a larger Franklin County constituency.
- The Rural Policy Advisory Commission will be schedule a public information and input session on the components of the Massachusetts Rural Plan in November or December. Details will be sent to all Council members and other stakeholders once details are solidified.
- The Special Commission on Local and Regional Health is considering recommendations for local health department workforce credentials and minimum services. The Commission will wrap up its work at the end of December and will have public input opportunities between now and then. Phoebe, who serves on the Commission, will present about its finding at our January meeting.



Climate Resilience

Green Communities Technical Assistance

FRCOG staff continue to assist Franklin County towns with Green Communities activities to reduce municipal energy use. In August, energy audits of municipal buildings were completed in the towns of Charlemont, Colrain, Heath, and Shelburne, which were funded through a Municipal Energy Technical Assistance (META) grant from the MA Department of Energy Resources (DOER). FRCOG applied for and administered the grant on behalf of the towns. This fall, FRCOG staff are working with three towns on their Green Communities designation applications, due October 26. Currently 21 of the 26 towns in Franklin County are designated Green Communities. Staff will also be assisting towns with Green Communities annual reporting, competitive grant applications, and procurement for grant funded projects over the course of FY19. This work is being funded by the DOER through a META grant. More Information: Alyssa Larose at alarose@frcog.org or ext. 127.

Local Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Updating

Seventeen (17) of our towns have a FEMA-approved Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan that expires this year or in 2019. Last October, FRCOG worked with these towns to prepare an application to FEMA/MEMA for funding to update the plans. Recently, FEMA awarded planning grants to all of these towns to fund plan updates. We are

excited to report that these towns have an opportunity to integrate climate change resiliency into these plan updates! A wealth of information is available in the recently released Commonwealth of Massachusetts [State Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan](#). This data and the work several towns did with Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) planning grants will mean that Franklin County towns will be among the first in the Commonwealth to integrate climate change resiliency into their hazard mitigation plans. [More Information](#): Kimberly Noake MacPhee at kmacphee@frcog.org or ext. 130.



Economic Development

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and Related DLTA Projects

In July, FRCOG received its 13th annual planning grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) to conduct the CEDS planning process for the greater Franklin County region. This process allows the region to maintain its eligibility for select federal funding programs. Over the course of this program year, the final annual update to the 2015 CEDS Plan will be completed and work will begin on a new five-year CEDS Plan. To view the most recent CEDS Annual report, it is available for view or download from the [FRCOG website](#).

Under the DLTA program, an economic development project for Whately was completed and one for Orange is underway. For Whately, the Economic Development Vision report was completed that incorporated demographic and economic data and the findings from a community discussion held in June. For Orange, an inventory of businesses and available commercial spaces is being completed. This data will be incorporated into an online mapping platform to encourage greater downtown business development. [More information](#): Jessica Atwood at jatwood@frcog.org or ext. 123.

Monroe Ramage Paper Mill – Overlook Park

Construction is underway for an Overlook Park at the site of the former Ramage Paper Mill's wood structure. This structure was remediated of hazardous materials and demolished last year. Northern Construction is scheduled to complete the park before the end of 2018. Funding for the project was provided by the FRCOG Brownfields Program, the MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, and a grant from TransCanada (presently Great River Hydro). [More information](#): Peggy Sloan at PSloan@frcog.org or ext. 133.

Regional Brownfields Program

The FRCOG's current EPA contract to conduct environmental site assessment activities closed on September 30th. Over the course of this nearly four-year contract, 19 properties in ten Franklin County towns were assessed for hazardous substances or petroleum products. FRCOG intends to apply to the EPA this fall for another assessment grant to continue this program. If a community has a site that may be appropriate for the Brownfields Program, they should contact staff to have it be considered for the program's waiting list. [More information](#): Peggy Sloan at PSloan@frcog.org or ext. 133.



Finance & Municipal Services

Build Your Financial Management Skills

Mark your calendars for the FRCOG's November 8 Municipal Financial Management Review from 6-8 PM. This workshop is open to all Select Board, Finance Committees, and Town staff. Register: Registrations@frcog.org.

Procurement Updates

Excellent prices were obtained for winter salt this year. This big ticket item (\$2 million in Franklin County) is a good test of how effective our collective program is. It is interesting to note that every year more towns use less sand and rock salt and more salt treated with organic enhancers. Dog tags and licenses have been bid and ordered for towns in 5 counties. FRCOG staff will be giving some town department procurement training in the upcoming months.

Regionalizing IT

Ten towns have expressed interest in pursuing the feasibility of regionalizing municipal IT networks. Staff from Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (EOTSS and formerly MassIT) came to Franklin County to discuss the project with interested municipalities. Next steps will be to conduct an inventory of existing IT municipal systems and a needs inventory. This hopefully will be followed by a feasibility study and lead to a grant proposal to create a regional network. More information: Linda Dunlavy at lindad@frcog.org or ext. 103.



Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness

Cybersecurity Conference

The Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council will present a Cybersecurity Conference on a date yet to be determined in late November/early December 2018. The conference will be open to first responders, municipal officials, and private sector partners. Topics will raise awareness around cybersecurity threats, demystify cyber threats, and provide participants with practical steps to take to prevent, mitigate and respond to cybersecurity attacks. Presenters will include the Director of the Massachusetts Fusion Center, and experts from the Federal Bureau of Investigations, Department of Homeland Security, Massachusetts State Police and more. The Franklin Regional Council of Governments will also present on regionalized approaches to cybersecurity. The conference will be free. Watch www.wrshac.org. More information: Raine@frcog.org or ext. 138.

Emergency Preparedness Strategic Planning

As the Regional Preparedness Program looks to hire its fifth full-time staff member—increasing its staffing by 67% in just eight years—the team thought it was time to take a moment to reflect on its mission and goals and make sure we’re meeting the needs of our emergency preparedness partners in the County. We took two days over the summer to conduct a SWOT analysis and develop a list of objectives, which included diversifying our funding streams, more fully integrating our programs, better branding, and enhancing the capacity of emergency management in Franklin County.

We realized that “Emergency Preparedness” was a better description of our program than “Regional Preparedness,” and have officially changed the name of the program accordingly. We are working with GCC to develop a series of community workshops for Emergency Management Directors. And please join us on December 6th for our *State of Emergency Preparedness in Franklin County* workshop, where we will present on how far we’ve come in accomplishing items identified as needing improvement in past after action reports and ask for your help in identifying what still needs to be done and how we should go about getting it done. More Information: Tracy Rogers at emergencyprep@frcog.org or ext. 118.

Franklin County Emergency Communication System Update

System Replacement Project:

The FRCOG and FCECS Oversight Committee have been engaged in discussions with EOPSS and the Governor’s Office at the highest levels, advocating for funding or the opportunity to migrate to the Commonwealth System. Up until recently, EOPSS has not been able to convey to FRCOG or the Oversight Committee information regarding scope of work, cost, or schedule for the state-wide project. This is due to funding for the project being tied to a proposed increase in the 911 telecommunication surcharge, which has now been passed. Next steps for the statewide upgrade are for EOPSS to release a notice of intent and then the full RFP for the engineering study. The RFP is expected to be advertised the mid-October. With the funding for the state-wide project now set, FRCOG and FCECS will be meeting with EOPSS to have them answer the questions the County needs in order to make an informed decision.

A public information outreach campaign will commence in the coming weeks. The purpose of the public meetings, in the form of FRCOG attending individual Selectboard meetings, will be to definitively answer the question of whether the region wants to migrate to the state system or rebuild the current system.

Radio System Manager:

There were no submissions from vendors for the radio system manager solicitation. At this time FRCOG is handling the role of radio system manager until a suitable replacement is found.

System Update:

The antenna at Plainfield tower was recently replaced. This project should increase the quality of coverage in parts of West County without negatively effecting other locations.

There was a lightning strike at the Poet’s Seat tower in Greenfield. Insurance will cover \$42,000 of damage at that location. More information: dnietsche@frcog.org or ext. 105.



Land Use & Natural Resources

Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership (MTWP) Project

The purpose of the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership Project (MTWP) is to bring recognition and additional financial and technical resources to the 21 municipalities in northwestern Massachusetts, primarily via special designation by the State and the U.S. Forest Service:

- Increase natural resource based economic development
- Increase forest land conservation and sustainable forestry practices on private lands
- Improve fiscal stability and sustainability of the municipalities

State legislation to create a Special Designation for the 21-town region and formally establish the MTWP was passed as part of the Environmental Bond Bill and was signed by Governor Baker on August 9, 2018. At least 11 of the 21 towns must opt in by either Select Board or Town Meeting vote in order to establish the MTWP Board whose purpose is to coordinate and oversee activities of the Partnership. More information: Peggy Sloan at psloan@frcog.org, or visit the Mohawk Trail Woodland Partnership Project [website](#).

Zoning for Sustainable Housing Production

FRCOG is working with the towns of Buckland, Shelburne, and Sunderland to implement zoning recommendations from recent housing plans completed in each town. FRCOG successfully applied for a Planning Assistance Grant from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to complete this work over the course of FY18 and FY19. Staff are working with all three towns towards bringing proposed zoning changes to Annual Town Meetings in the spring. In Shelburne, staff have been working with the Planning Board to assess and draft zoning changes for the Shelburne Falls village zoning districts to support the historic development pattern of the village, encourage appropriate infill development, and incentivize affordable housing. At a recent Shelburne Planning Board meeting, FRCOG staff facilitated a discussion with State and regional affordable housing stakeholders and local housing advocates, realtors, and developers about the proposed zoning changes and additional strategies the Town could take to support affordable housing in Shelburne. More information: Alyssa Larose at alarose@frcog.org or ext. 127.



Public & Community Health

CPHS Flu Clinic Schedule Released

Flu season is here and it is time to do your part to build community immunity! Help yourself and your vulnerable neighbors and co-workers by getting a flu shot. The Cooperative Public Health Service, FRCOG's 11-town health department, is hosting twelve flu clinics throughout the region. Flu clinic schedule: <https://frcog.org/2018-flu-clinic-schedule/>.

Greenfield Drug Free Communities Grant Awarded to FRCOG

FRCOG's Partnership for Youth is pleased to announce that we have been awarded a five year federal grant to host the Safe Schools Safe Streets (or4SC) Coalition for Greenfield. This Coalition works to reduce youth substance use through evidence-based strategies, and will include a full time director (COG staffer Ilana Gerjuoy) and two part time staff working on youth and parent engagement (these positions open now). We look forward to continuing the great work of the Coalition with this new funding. More information: kallen@frcog.org or ext. 119.

Low-Cost Food Safety Training

FRCOG's Food Safety Agent, Randy Crochier, is teaching our annual 3-in-1 food safety course on 10/16 at Red Gate Farm in Buckland. Participants get ServeSafe, Chokesaver, and Allergan certified, thanks to support from a federal Food and Drug Administration Voluntary Standards grant. Register: registrations@frcog.org.

Municipal Policy to Reduce Youth Substance Use

The Communities That Care Coalition continues to work with school, town and agency partners to implement effective strategies for reducing youth substance use and improving youth health, and will be updating their Community Action Plan this year. Through DLTA funding, staff have been meeting with towns interested in taking action to reduce youth substance use to share information about what municipal policy options exist. Wendell, Sunderland, and Montague have held meetings so far. Interested? More information: kallen@frcog.org or ext. 119.



Training & Education

Local Officials Workshops

The FY19 Local Officials Workshop series began on September 13th with *Selectboard 101* and an interactive discussion of the basics that newly-elected members need to know about serving on a town select board. Thanks to Joe Judd, former Selectboard member and current Shelburne Town Clerk, for his assistance with this workshop. More information: BDean@frcog.org or ext. 108.

On September 18th we hosted 70 people for the state's first Agricultural Hemp workshop, featuring MDAR's Hemp Program Director and an Agronomist from the University of Vermont. More information: walker@frcog.org or ext. 102 for materials.

The October workshop focused on succession planning. Sean Cronin from the Division of Local Services joined us to discuss the recent Local Government Workforce Skills Gap Report, which was convened by the Lt. Governor and focused on statewide strategies to recruit and attract people to municipal employment. The group in attendance then discussed what we could do in Franklin County to attract a new municipal workforce and what lead the FRCOG could take. Ideas generated were to create a Citizen Leadership Academy modeled

after a similar program in Lexington, MA https://www.mma.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/lexington_citizens_leadership_academy-1.pdf, create template Committee and Board job descriptions and application forms, develop a recruitment social media campaign, and work with GCC to develop a municipal government and/or municipal financial services education track.

Later this year, we hope you can join us for:

- November 6: Municipal Financial Management Review
- December 6: State of the County's Emergency Preparedness



Transportation

Bicycle Friendly Business Program

Research shows that bicycle tourism is strong and growing in western Massachusetts. To help capture the potential economic rewards of bike tourism, the FRCOG is preparing to launch a Bike Friendly Business Program. This program is aimed at recognizing and marketing Franklin County businesses that welcome and support the bicycling community. Bike Friendly businesses provide a range of amenities that can draw cyclists to their establishments including bike parking, water and restrooms, repair stations, snacks, bike rentals and more. Be on the lookout for more information and an application to join the Franklin County Bicycle Friendly Business Program arriving in your mailbox this Fall! More information: giannini@frcog.org or ext. 125.

Complete Streets

FRCOG staff finalized Complete Streets Prioritization Plans for the Towns of Buckland, Montague, and Whately, and helped these Towns prepare applications to MassDOT for implementation funding. Applications were due October 1, 2018. Complete Streets are designed for all modes of transportation, not just vehicles, and typically include improvements that make biking and walking safer and more enjoyable. The FRCOG is available to answer questions about the program, assist with securing MassDOT funding to participate in the program, and can work with your town to develop a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan. More information: giannini@frcog.org or ext. 125.

Expansion of Passenger Rail

There will be a pilot expansion of north-south passenger rail service, currently expected to begin in June of 2019. The 2 ½ year expansion will include four additional round trips between Springfield and Greenfield (two morning and two afternoon/evening), and one new weekend round trip. This will allow Franklin County residents to get to and from New York City in one day. The pilot will be evaluated primarily by ridership numbers. The FRCOG will work with PVPC to market the service in the coming months and to monitor ridership, customer satisfaction, and any anomalies (like rerouting passengers from train to bus during track repair) that could impact ridership. Pending funding from the Economic Development Bond, the FRCOG and Chamber will work together to examine options for weekend transportation service between the Greenfield train station and recreational opportunities throughout the county. More information: lindad@frcog.org or ext. 103.

Mahican-Mohawk Trail Maps

The final edits have been made to the Mahican-Mohawk Trail map after a nearly 2 year effort with a wide range of stakeholders, and it will be available to the general public this Fall. The Mahican-Mohawk Trail is a planned hiking/walking trail that spans from the Connecticut River in Massachusetts to the Hudson River in New York. It is historically significant because it generally follows the original Native American footpath that traversed our region for centuries. At this time, approximately 35 miles of the planned 100-mile route is open to hikers, and another 10 miles can be paddled as a water trail on the Deerfield River. In Franklin County, the trail runs from Deerfield to Charlemont, and continues into Berkshire County. Maps will be available through local visitor centers, chambers of commerce, the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation, and local town halls and libraries. More information: mmullaney@frcog.org or ext. 129.

Walk Franklin County – Look Who’s Walking!

The FRCOG has revised and reissued our popular Walk Franklin County maps. Every Franklin County town has its own map that highlights scenic walking routes ranging from 1-4 miles, with points of interest marked along the way. Throughout the Fall we are running a contest to get people moving. Find a digital version of the maps at www.frcog.org, or paper maps at your local town hall or library and get walking! Take a picture of yourself and post it to the FRCOG Facebook “Look Who’s Walking” event page, or tweet us with the hashtag #walkfranklincounty from September through October and we will enter you for giveaways (like a Fitbit!) to help keep you active. More information: giannini@frcog.org or ext. 125.



Staff Updates & Changes

Staff Changes

- **Kala Fisher** is our newest Town Accountant, joining our Town Accounting Program in August.
- **Xander Sylvain** is joining the Emergency Preparedness Program on October 15 as our new Program Assistant working on a number of regional priorities.