



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Franklin Regional Planning Board— *MINUTES*

Date & Time:	Thursday, June 27, 2019 / 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Location:	JW Olver Transit Center, 12 Olive Street, Greenfield, MA – First Floor Conference Room
Facilitator:	Jerry Lund, Chair - FRPB; Peggy Sloan, Planning Director - FRCOG

FRPB MEMBERS

- Jerry Lund**, Chair, Leyden, At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee
- James Basford**, Orange At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee, FRPB representative to the FRCOG Council, FRCOG Executive Committee
- Ted Cady**, Warwick Planning Board, FRPB Executive Committee
- Ann-Mary Cloutier**, Deerfield Planning Board
- Jennifer Gross**, Wendell Select Board
- Wayne Hachey**, New Salem Select Board, FRCOG Council
- Thomas Hutcheson**, 1st Vice Chair, Greenfield At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee
- Jonathan Lagrèze**, Colrain Select Board
- Richard Nathhorst**, Leverett Planning Board
- Charles Olchowski**, Greenfield At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee
- Micki Paddock**, Shutesbury At-Large
- Mike Shaffer**, Erving Planning Board
- Chuck Washer**, Shelburne Select Board, FRPB Representative to the REPC

FRCOG STAFF

- Peggy Sloan**, Planning & Development Director
- Jessica Atwood**, Economic Development Program Manager
- Kimberly Noake McPhee**, Land Use & Natural Resources Program Manager
- Maureen Mullaney**, Transportation & GIS Program Manager II
- Liz Jacobson-Carroll**, Administrative Services Assistant

PRESENTERS/GUESTS

1. Introductions	J. Lund, Chair – FRPB & FRPB Members
J. Lund convened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. A round of introductions followed.	
2. Review and Approval of May 23, 2018 FRPB Minutes	J. Lund, Chair – FRPB & FRPB Members
T. Hutcheson moved to adopt the 5/23/19 minutes, T. Cady seconded the motion, and the motion passed with 2 abstentions. (Lagrèze, Cloutier)	
3. Presentation & Vote on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2019 Annual Report	J. Atwood – Economic Development Program

J. Atwood presented an overview of the 2019 CEDS Annual Report -- the 4th and final update to the 2015 plan covering the 26 towns of Franklin County and Amherst, Athol, and Phillipston. The report includes demographic and economic data, as well as updates on economic development programs and projects, she said, and the submission of it maintains the region’s eligibility for select federal EDA funding. She reviewed changes made since the draft document was last presented to the board. These included the addition of language pertaining to the need for vehicle ownership, the closure of a key employer, municipal financial stability, the opening of a poultry processing plant, and the potential impact of a major recession. If approved by the board, she will submit the report to the US EDA Philadelphia Regional Office on June 28, 2019.

J. Atwood provided a look ahead to the 2020-24 CEDS Plan:

- the scope will narrow slightly to include only the 26 towns of Franklin County
- the committee has been trimmed from 50 to 19 members representing the geography and demographics of the region, regional organizations with shared goals, and at-large members
- there will be a new emphasis on collaboration with other regional organizations for coordinated public outreach, sharing data, etc.

The presentation received a round of applause.

T. Hutcheson moved to accept the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2019 Annual Report, T. Cady seconded the motion, and the motion passed with one abstention (Cloutier).

4. Presentation & Discussion on the Regional Transportation Plan	M. Mullaney, Transportation & GIS Program Manager II - FRCOG
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M. Mullaney led attendees through an on-line interactive story map of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), available at <http://frcog.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=19ddd565c2a34907a916daf192a8a363>).

She reviewed the purpose of the RTP, and referred to a history of successful implementation of past RTP recommendations. She summarized staff members’ extensive public outreach, as well as their ongoing efforts to make the transportation planning process, infrastructure, and service accessible to all. She noted RTP goals continue to focus on promoting economic development, maintaining the rural character of the region, improving mobility, and enhancing sustainability. This plan includes additional emphasis on safety and security, and on climate change resiliency.

Focusing on the Regional Demographics and Economic Profile chapter, M. Mullaney demonstrated the interactive features of the story map where statistics are available via various GIS layers for each town. Additional chapters summarize and offer recommendations on each topic. Chapters on each mode of transportation summarize available services and suggest paths toward improvement. Pausing on the Passenger Rail chapter, M. Mullaney shared her enthusiasm for recently filed legislation regarding a potential east-west route, and for the pilot of additional runs on the north-south route slated to begin in the fall. FRCOG is eager to begin marketing the latter, once the start date, the schedule, and the fare are announced. She spoke of the demonstrated need for expanded transit, successful efforts to

improve bicycle and pedestrian transportation, and ongoing work with recreational tourism partners. With 40% of carbon emissions produced through transportation, the staff is taking a hard look at how to move toward a no-carbon system, she said, and referred to a collaborative effort with The Nature Conservancy, as well as a productive meeting with community leaders earlier in the month. The concluding chapter, the Top 25 Transportation Recommendations for Franklin County, serves to focus staff activity for the coming four years, and to provide a reference point for assessing meaningful progress. In conclusion, M. Mullaney asked members to review the story map and RTP on-line, and to provide her with feedback during the public comment period prior to the Transportation Planning Organization’s anticipated endorsement on July 23rd.

In response to a question, M. Mullaney referenced a similarly interactive and multi-layered database of culverts throughout the region; it is available on the FRCOG website, along with a report on other projects completed by staff last year. J. Lund emphasized the importance of members understanding the vulnerability posed by undersized culverts in each of their towns.

M. Paddock initiated a discussion regarding invasive plant encroaching on roadways, and expressed her concern regarding a lack of consistency/efficacy in the manner in which they are treated by the various highway departments. The encroaching plants create safety issues for bikers, damage road surfaces from below, clog culverts, and affect runoff; the only effective chemical treatment (Roundup) is a carcinogen, and cutting the plants causes them to spread faster. M. Mullaney indicated that she would include the topic in an FAQ manual for superintendents that the FRCOG is planning to develop in the coming year.

The presentation received a round of applause.

<p>5. A Framework for Resilience – Responding to Climate Change in the Deerfield River Watershed & Updates on FERC Relicensing of Bear Swamp and Northfield Mountain Hydroelectric Facilities</p>	<p>K. MacPhee – Land Use & Natural Resources Program Manager and P. Sloan, Planning Director – FRCOG</p>
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K. MacPhee announced that the Framework for Resilience, drafts of which the FRPB has seen at earlier meetings, is complete. It is available for downloading from the FRCOG website. She summarized the research that went into creating the Framework, and identified the climate concerns it addresses: changes in precipitation, rising temperatures, and extreme weather. She explained that it focuses on assessing and building resiliency in three sectors: Natural Resources & Habitat; Human Health & Welfare, and the Local Economy & Infrastructure.

The Framework draws from strong data sets provided by the Commonwealth and UMass, via resilientma.org, and includes useful community-level statistics, K. MacPhee said. She emphasized the importance of developing recommendations that are achievable to towns, noting that their boards and committees have authority to put important measures in place. Referencing multiple stressors on individual properties as well on the watershed as a whole, she recommended that municipalities look to their neighboring towns for ways to collaborate.

The Framework recommends the convening of a Resilient Deerfield River Watershed (DRW) Coalition of representatives of the 14 towns. K. MacPhee is asking Boards of Selectmen to appoint one or two representatives each, and reported that both Leyden and Conway have already done so. She requested that FRPB members identify fellow residents who may be interested in brainstorming means to resiliency on these different geographic scales, and in facilitating planning across town boundaries. Funding for this work may be available through the MA Municipal Vulnerability Program (MVP); funding for the printing of copies of the Framework for distribution to boards, committees, and libraries has not yet been identified.

J. Lund initiated a discussion regarding all that MA can learn from VT, especially given that VT has been working toward resiliency in the upper DRV for some time. Possible sources of funding -- and work with organizations that cross state borders, such as the Connecticut River Conservancy -- were mentioned. K. MacPhee described a successful training session for highway bosses, recently co-sponsored by MassDOT and the Franklin Conservation District, that was modeled on a VT program; she is aiming to arrange more such on-site events. R. Nathhorst described dangerous, multi-day road outages following a spring storm in Leverett, a related allocation of funds at town meeting, and a need for state and federal funds. M. Mullaney emphasized that FRCOG is increasing its focus on culverts and related infrastructure.

P. Sloan gave brief updates on FERC relicensing of the Bear Swamp and Northfield Mountain hydroelectric facilities. She noted that FirstLight is in the process of getting permits for work to happen over the summer and has begun to produce archeological reports regarding Bear Swamp. They won't be filing the final license application with FERC for a year or so, K. MacPhee said, but will file a request to the state for water quality certification simultaneously. Regarding Northfield Mountain, P. Sloan said that Montague has submitted requests pertaining to recreational facilities, and FRCOG will be helping Northfield and Gill to do the same. She stressed that the re-licensing is presenting a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to these towns. FERC has not yet ruled on FirstLight's proposal for multiple LLCs to own the facility, despite the latter's expectation that it would be rubber-stamped, K. MacPhee said.

J. Lund recommended the recently published The Uninhabitable Earth by David Wallace-Wells, and T. Hutcheson, Healing Earth by John Todd. The presentation received a round of applause.

6. Review and Vote on Slate of Nominations for 2019/20 FRPB Annual Elections (please see attached Slate of Nomination)	FRPB Nominating Committee – G. Walker, C. Olchowski & J. Basford
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C. Olchowski read aloud the Slate of Nomination.

T. Cady moved to accept the changes to the FRPB membership as indicated in the Slate of Nomination 2019/20 FRPB Annual Election, W. Hachey seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

7. Other Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting/Adjourn/Public Comment	
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P. Sloan announced that FRCOG was recently awarded a brownfields assessment grant, and was one of only four recipient organizations in the state. Funding will be available to towns to have potentially hazardous sites – especially those not currently on the tax rolls and eyed for economic development

projects – to be assessed, and referenced a presentation to municipal officials in the fall. She plans to begin the three-year grant period by hiring a consultant, then compiling a list of sites to be considered, including those currently on a waiting list. The latter include mills adjacent to what was the contaminated Ramage Mill site, recently cleaned up and turned into a public park. Discussion turned toward the conversion of mills into marijuana cultivation facilities in neighboring counties, and then to retail sales of marijuana in Franklin and Hampshire counties.

T. Hutcheson moved to adjourn the meeting, T. Cady seconded the motion, and the meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM.

Documents Distributed / Presentations Viewed:

- Agenda
- FRPB Minutes, May 23, 2019 – DRAFT
- *Greater Franklin County 2019 CEDS Annual Report, June 27, 2019* (PowerPoint)
- *Franklin County Regional Transportation Plan* (story map)
(<http://frcog.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=19ddd565c2a34907a916daf192a8a363>)
- Slate of Nominations for 2019/20 FRPB Annual Elections
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The next meeting will be held on September 26, 2019. Copies of all documents are available. Please contact Liz Jacobson-Carroll at ljc@frcog.org or 413-774-3167 x101.

Respectfully submitted,

Gisela Walker, Clerk - FRPB