**Advocacy**

**MA Rural Policy Plan Released**

The FRCOG facilitated the development of the Massachusetts Rural Policy Plan, which was rolled out at the State House on October 2nd. The intent of the Rural Policy Plan is to illustrate the unique attributes and challenges faced by rural communities, inform policy makers of existing best practices, and identify a series of recommendations to be explored and implemented. From the roughly one hundred suggestions, the Plan proposes a set of top priorities that, along with achievable action items, will assist rural communities in the near term.

The [Rural Policy Plan for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts](https://frcog.org/program-services/municipal-resources/) is now available on our website. **More Information:** Linda Dunlavy at lindad@frcog.org or ext. 103.

**Finance & Municipal Services**

**Purchasing Program - October 1 Contracts**

New Collective Contracts with a start date of October 1 include Water Treatment Chemicals, Road Sand, Winter Rock Salt and Treated Salt, Liquid Road Pretreatment, and the ordering of Dog Tags and Licenses.

Winter Rock Salt prices for our towns were very competitive with the State bid; the FRCOG bid has the added benefit of offering two contracts for every town. In the event of a shortage, our towns can fall back on a secondary contract and protect themselves from shortages that have plagued the industry in past years.

Integration of Hampshire County towns who formerly bid with the Hampshire Council of Governments is going smoothly. FRCOG staff will visit Hampshire County officials through the fall months to develop a smooth transition into the budget season and preparation for FY21 bids. **More Information:** Andrea Woods at bids@frcog.org or ext. 104.

**Training & Education**

**Local Officials Workshops**

The FY20 Local Officials Workshop series rolled out this fall with a Municipal Financial Management workshop hosted by the [MA DOR Division of Local Services](https://frcog.org/program-services/municipal-resources/) on October 3rd.

Coming up later this fall will be a session on Mosquito Control District services and costs, in response to the current statewide Eastern Equine Encephalitis outbreak, and a December session on Age-Friendly Community Planning. Stay tuned!

Materials from all the municipal workshops are available at: [https://frcog.org/program-services/municipal-resources/](https://frcog.org/program-services/municipal-resources/).

Have ideas for the upcoming workshop series? Let us know by contacting Rebekah at admin@frcog.org or Phoebe at walker@frcog.org.
Economic Development

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Updates Underway

Work is underway to create a new CEDS Plan for Franklin County (the 2019 Annual Report on the 2015 CEDS Plan can be accessed at: [https://frcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/2019-CEDS-Summary.pdf](https://frcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/2019-CEDS-Summary.pdf)). The 2020 CEDS Plan will be our region’s roadmap for implementing economic development initiatives over the next five years. Guiding its creation is a newly re-structured CEDS Committee, which has members from across the county and representation from key partner organizations, such as the MassHire Regional Workforce Board, Franklin County CDC and others. Their first meeting will be **November 19 at 3:30 p.m. in the 1st floor of the JWO Transit Center.**

The Plan will use a framework from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) to: examine economic conditions; identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; and establish action items to be implemented through 2024. The Plan will maintain the region’s eligibility to apply for select EDA funding programs, such as for infrastructure projects or feasibility studies. In November, FRCOG will reach out to member municipalities and regional economic development entities to solicit project ideas for possible inclusion in the Plan. **More Information: Jessica Atwood at jatwood@frcog.org or ext. 123.**

Transportation

Expansion of Passenger Rail

Expanded passenger rail service started on August 30. A 2-year pilot program will provide two additional roundtrips per day during the week between Greenfield and Springfield (with stops in Northampton and Holyoke), with one more roundtrip on weekends and holidays. This additional service will make it possible to travel to New York City and back in the same day.

The FRCOG recently received a contract from MassDOT to develop marketing materials for the expanded service. Be on the lookout for a marketing and branding campaign later this fall! **More Information: Maureen Mullaney at mmullaney@frcog.org or ext. 132.**

Public & Community Health

Build Your Community’s Immunity: Get a Flu Shot!

The flu season is beginning! Regional Public Health Nurse Lisa White reminds us that everyone six months of age or older needs a flu vaccine. When we all are vaccinated, we build community immunity that protects the elderly, children, and those with compromised immune systems from the terrible effects of influenza. For information on prevention, symptoms, and treatment of influenza, visit [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov).

The Cooperative Public Health Service (CPHS) is offering influenza vaccines (with no insurance co-pay) to area residents at regularly scheduled wellness clinics throughout the region. For a schedule of all CPHS scheduled flu clinics, visit [https://frcog.org/flu-clinic/](https://frcog.org/flu-clinic/). **More Information: Lisa White, Regional Public Health Nurse, at lwhite@frcog.org.**

Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness

Franklin County Emergency Communication System Update

On September 5, the FRCOG and Franklin County Emergency Communications System (FCECS) Oversight Committee held another regional forum focusing on the future of emergency communication in the County. At that meeting, the Secretary of the Executive Office of Technology Safety and Security (EOTSS) pledged to include Franklin County in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Interoperable Radio System (CoMIRS). His team addressed the five criteria that EOTSS has studied to ensure that Franklin County can and should move to CoMIRS: coverage, capacity, subscriber units, functionality, and standards adherence. FRCOG staff have redrafted the agreement between towns and the FRCOG to reflect the expected transition to CoMIRS. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been sent to all towns for signature. **More Information: Dan Nietsche dnietsche@frcog.org or ext 105.**
Climate Resilience

River Corridor Management Toolkit

Over the last 10 years, FRCOG has been using the science of Fluvial Geomorphology to further river and watershed assessment, restoration and management techniques in the Franklin County portion of the Deerfield River Watershed. Continued development and encroachments in the river corridor, along with more frequent and intense rain events due to climate change, stress these unstable river systems.

FRCOG recently completed a River Corridor Management Toolkit, which includes two innovative tools: a Model River Corridor Protection Overlay Zoning District Bylaw and a draft River Corridor Easement Restriction. The River Corridor Management Toolkit is available online at: [https://frcog.org/publication/view/river-corridor-toolkit/](https://frcog.org/publication/view/river-corridor-toolkit/).

The Toolkit can be used by state agency staff, communities and landowners in the Deerfield River Watershed and across the Commonwealth who are interested in river restoration and protection, climate resilient land use, and the reduction of threats to critical infrastructure caused by increasingly severe and frequent flood events. More Information: Kimberly Noake MacPhee at kmacphee@frcog.org or ext. 130.

Municipal Vulnerability Program Funds Now Available

The next round of funding available for proposals for the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program, which provides support for Massachusetts cities and towns to plan for climate change and implement key adaptation actions for resiliency, is now open! More Information: Kimberly Noake MacPhee at kmacphee@frcog.org or ext. 130, or visit these links:


Land Use & Natural Resources

Franklin County Small Town Housing Working Group

As a follow up to the Franklin County Affordable Housing Roundtable event in April, FRCOG has launched a Small Town Housing Working Group to bring together housing stakeholders to continue working on issues and challenges identified, with a focus on smaller towns with limited housing or planning staff capacity. This will be an opportunity for towns to share information about their community’s current housing efforts, network with other towns, and develop possible shared solutions to address housing needs and barriers. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 23, from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. at the JWO Transit Center in Greenfield. More Information: Alyssa Larose at alarose@frcog.org or ext. 127.

Staff Updates & Changes

We welcome Randy Crochier to the role of Regional Health Agent for the CPHS health district. Randy has been the health district’s part time Food Safety Agent for the past four years. Before that, he was involved as a Board of Health member in the creation of the district.

We bid a fond farewell to Jeanette Voas, who has served as the Evaluation Coordinator for the Communities That Care Coalition and the Partnership for Youth. Jeanette has shepherded the regional Teen Health Survey and brought us high quality, clearly and beautifully presented qualitative and quantitative data for the last 13 years. We will miss her tremendously.

Have a great fall from all of us at the FRCOG! www.frcog.org