**Advocacy**

**FRCOG Monitoring the Transportation and Climate Initiative**

The Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI) is a regional consortium of 12 Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states and the District of Columbia working together to improve transportation, develop the clean energy economy, and reduce greenhouse gases from the transportation sector. Transportation emissions make up 40% of the carbon emissions of the TCI area. To achieve these reductions, TCI is investigating the use of a “Cap and Invest” program that generates revenue through “caps” on emissions, and “invests” the revenue in ways that reduce emissions. Some examples include increasing the use of clean energy vehicles, which would require the buildout of charging infrastructure, or investing in smart growth and compact development that greatly reduce the need to drive. The FRCOG has been monitoring and involved in TCI to ensure that the initiative benefits rural areas, and staff recently attended a 12-state meeting about the draft MOU that will formalize the partnership of the TCI area and develop the cap and invest program. The draft MOU can be viewed at [https://www.transportationandclimate.org/main-menu/tci-regional-policy-design-stakeholder-input-form](https://www.transportationandclimate.org/main-menu/tci-regional-policy-design-stakeholder-input-form).

More Information: Linda Dunlavy at lindad@frcog.org or ext. 103.

**Training & Education**

**Local Officials Workshops**

Our Local Officials Workshop opened a new year with a workshop on safety for libraries and other lightly-staffed municipal offices. Two dozen people attended to learn about de-escalation and personal protection, with speakers from [Clinical & Support Options](https://www.frcog.org/program-services/municipal-resources/) and the Deerfield Police Department.

FRCOG also provided fall training to Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals members in collaboration with the [Citizen Planner Training Collaborative](https://www.cptc.org/). Two courses were offered: “Writing Fair and Defensible Decisions” and “Zoning with Overlay Districts”.

Materials from all 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 Amanda Doster, Regional Projects Coordinator, at adoster@frcog.org or ext. 120.
Public & Community Health

Cooperative Public Health Service Continues to Grow

The member towns of the Cooperative Public Health Service Health district recently welcomed the Town of Bernardston as a new member. The CPHS district will do the community sanitation, food safety, public health nursing and communicable disease responsibilities for the town, and the Board of Health will continue to cover the Septic and Private Well work for Bernardston.

In related news, FRCOG is happy to welcome Lisa Danek Burke, longtime local septic engineer and former Rowe Health Agent, to the role of Cooperative Public Health Service Regional Health Agent. Lisa joins full-time district staff Randy Crochier and Lisa White, and seasonal Title 5 Agent, Nicole Zabko. Lisa will be working 22.5 hours a week, and can be reached at ldburke@frcog.org or 413-774-3167 x 141.

The CPHS district currently serves as the comprehensive health department for the towns of Bernardston (except Title 5 work), Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Gill, Hawley, Heath, Leyden, Monroe, Rowe, and Shelburne. The towns of Erving, Deerfield, and Conway are members of the district for public health nursing only (see map).

More Information: Lisa White, Regional Public Health Nurse, at lwhite@frcog.org.

Transportation

Traffic Counting

It’s that time of year again! The FRCOG conducts traffic counts free of charge for our member municipalities on a first come, first served basis. Counts typically occur between April and October, and can be used to support grant applications, town planning projects, and any number of other local initiatives. We start building the schedule in February, so we’ll be soliciting your requests soon.

More Information: Laurie Scarbrough at lscarbrough@frcog.org or ext. 132.

Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness

Pediatric Surge Annex

Through a project funded by the Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council, six of the nine acute care hospitals in western Massachusetts now have a pediatric surge annex to append to their individual hospital emergency operations plans. The six hospitals that agreed to work on this project now have an annex that includes plans for utilizing space differently; obtaining specialized equipment, supplies, and pharmaceuticals; creating a pediatric safe area for waiting family members or unaccompanied minors; and a list of recommended trainings and just-in-time resources for hospital staff to take advantage of.

More Information: Tracy Rogers at emergencyprep@frcog.org or ext. 118.

Economic Development

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

The 2020 CEDS Plan will serve as a roadmap for economic development over the next five years in Franklin County. Select local and regional economic development projects seeking public investment will be highlighted in the Plan. For projects applying for federal EDA investment, inclusion in the Plan is required. For other projects, it is advantageous to be included, as it demonstrates regional support and/or may help identify funding sources. To submit a project for consideration, an online project proposal form must be completed by March 6th.

More Information: Jessica Atwood at jatwood@frcog.org or ext. 123.
Climate Resilience

Affordable Access to Regional Coordination (AARC) Grant

FRCOG was recently awarded a grant of $107,850 from the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) to increase local knowledge of clean energy opportunities for low-income households, and to create and expand resources for residents, landlords and regional partners working with low-income households. FRCOG staff will be attending trainings and workshops to build our knowledge of available technologies and incentives, and will coordinate outreach to low-income residents and landlords with Community Action, Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority, LifePath, senior centers, municipalities, town energy committees, and others. FRCOG staff will also provide direct assistance to low-income residents, landlords, and affordable housing developers on available incentives and clean energy technologies, with help from a clean energy consultant. The overall goal of the program will be to build and sustain local and regional capacity to increase adoption of clean energy technologies for low-income households in order to reduce energy costs and GHG emissions, and to improve the health, safety, and comfort of housing in the region.

More Information: Alyssa Larose at alarose@frcog.org or ext. 127.

Land Use & Natural Resources

Regional Pollinator Plan

FRCOG will collaborate with seven Franklin County towns to establish a Regional Pollinator Habitat Corridor — the first of its kind in Massachusetts — and the Commonwealth recently announced $70,000 in funding to help it take flight. Heath, Shelburne, Conway, Bernardston, Montague, Wendell, and Orange will work with FRCOG to create pollinator habitat maps, update land-use regulations to include requirements for native plantings for development and pollinator-friendly landscape management practices, and Create a Pollinator Habitat Corridor Implementation Toolkit. Local level strategies such as these are critically needed to respond to climate change, genetic modification, pesticide use, and habitat loss. Sustainability of our food systems and local farms is linked to pollinators. A 2017 Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources plan identified a critical need to evaluate, sustain, and enhance pollinator populations in the state. The Pollinator Habitat Corridor plan will be expandable, so that with additional funding and interest from other Franklin County towns the regional pollinator corridors can be expanded across the county.

More Information: Kimberly Noake MacPhee at kmacphee@frcog.org or ext. 130.

Staff Updates & Changes

After seven years in our Partnership for Youth, FRCOG’s Amanda Doster has transitioned to a new role as our Regional Projects Coordinator. She will be working on projects including sewer and water infrastructure issues, local official education, shared services, and more. We are pleased to have her in this new role!

As noted above, Lisa Danek Burke recently assumed the role of Regional Health Agent for the CPHS health district. Other new faces in our offices include Allison Gage, Land Use and Natural Resources Planner, and Rachel Mason, Homeland Security Assistant; new FRCOG staff who you may see in your office include our two new town accountants, Debbie Jones and Dara LaPlante. We welcome them all to the FRCOG!

Have a great winter from all of us at the FRCOG!

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