FRPB MEMBERS
Jerry Lund, Chair, Leyden, At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee
James Basford, Orange At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee, FRPB Rep. to the FRCOG Council, FRCOG Executive Committee, Rep. to the Route 2 Task Force
Steven Blinder, New Salem Planning Board
Julia Blyth, Northfield At-Large, FRPB Exec. Comm., CT River Streambank Erosion Committee Rep.
Marybeth Chichester, Colrain Planning Board
Ron Coler, Ashfield At-Large
Stanley Garland, Bernardston Select Board
Jennifer Gross, Wendell Select Board, FRPB Executive Committee
Elizabeth (Betsy) Irving, Montague Planning Board
Emily Johnson, Deerfield At-Large
Jeff Lacy, Shutesbury Planning Board
Mike Shaffer, Erving Planning Board
Jane Shaney, Ashfield Planning Board
Don Sluter, Whately Planning Board
Peter Nai, Bernardston Planning Board
Richard Nathhorst, Leverett Planning Board
Charles Olchowski, Greenfield At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee
Phil Pless, Ashfield, At-Large
Homer (Tony) Stavely, Northfield Planning Board
Joseph Strzegowski, Conway Planning Board
David Travers, Heath Select Board
Jon Wyman, Buckland Planning Board
Mariah, Kurtz, Erving Town Planner & Select Board Rep.

FRCOG STAFF
Peggy Sloan, Planning & Development Director; Jessica Atwood, Economic Development Program Manager; Maureen Mullaney, Transportation & GIS Program Manager II; and Liz Jacobson-Carroll, Administrative Services Assistant;

GUESTS
1. Review and Approval of January 23, 2020 FRPB Minutes

Basford moved to approve the January 23, 2020 minutes, Shaffer seconded the motion, and the motion passed with one abstention (Chichester).

2. Review and Approval of 2020 Franklin County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Plan

Atwood presented an overview of the CEDS planning process and schedule, and highlighted updates made to the draft 2020 CEDS Plan. These changes include corrections, revisions, and responses to comments received. In addition, more substantive changes made pertain to the COVID-19 state of emergency and its impact on the economy.

Updated information related to the pandemic included:
- Phase I and II information related to the reopening timeline
- A graphic depicting the re-opening phases I to IV
- Monthly unemployment rate and unemployment insurance claimant data
- Mention of the important role of temporary seasonal and guest workers in the agricultural industry
- Reference to the issue of food insecurity
- Discussion of child care and elder care services impact

Atwood noted two amendments and two new projects in the Action Plan chapter. Amendments include the addition of advocating for resources to reduce operational costs for municipalities receiving last mile broadband; and further collaborating with public and private sector stakeholders to align economic development with sustainability and resiliency planning. New projects included the construction of a state-of-the-art anaerobic digester to handle the sludge disposal needs of the Greenfield treatment plant, with the possibility of adding other towns; and a food security infrastructure project to support local production, processing, storage and distribution.

A section was added that highlighted thirteen projects from the Action Plan that have the potential for transformative regional impact, Atwood noted.

In the appendix, seven town-level data tables were added that included demographic, economic and housing data.

The full 80 page CEDS Plan is available on the FRCOG web site, Atwood said, as is a new 6 page summary.
Lund expressed his interest in linking public health and economic development, noting that the former is prerequisite to the latter. Specifically, he identified the expansion of the Orange Community Health Center as a driver of economic resilience. Atwood indicated that she is unsure if EDA would fund such a project, but offered to discuss this further as well as other potential funding sources.

*Travers made a motion to approve the 2020 Franklin County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan as presented; Basford seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously with one abstention (Chichester).*

In conclusion, Atwood mentioned the status of two EDA grants for which FRCOG is eligible. She anticipates receipt of an annual planning grant starting on July 1, 2020 and submitted an application for a $400,000 non-competitive, supplemental planning grant. The latter is slated to help staff expand work with partner organizations on economic recovery and resiliency and assist with CEDS project applications, and to hire a contractor to do direct business technical assistance, and to hire a contractor to do a county-wide water and/or wastewater infrastructure needs study. She also noted that the Franklin County Community Development Corporation applied for a non-competitive grant of $730,000 to recapitalize their business lending program.

| 3. Transportation Planning Updates (Unified Planning Work Program, Passenger Rail, and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) projects | M. Mullaney, Transportation & GIS Program Manager II, FRCOG |

Mullaney reported on three transportation planning projects. First, she described the four groups of tasks that make up the Unified Planning Work Program – the document that guides FRCOG’s transportation planning program using federal money contracted through MassDOT. Group 1 tasks are required as basic elements of transportation planning and include creating a unified planning work program, preparing and assisting with the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), public participation, reporting on Title VI planning activities and advancing environmental justice in transportation planning and projects. Group 2 consists of a set of data collection tasks and analytical activities done annually including traffic studies, GIS mapping and analysis, air quality compliance and modeling, traffic counting, and pavement management. Group 3 tasks are transportation planning studies that change yearly, and are specific to Franklin County. This year they include studying the feasibility of partnering with the Pioneer Valley Bike Share program to extend it into Franklin County, monitoring and promoting the new passenger rail service, launching an electric vehicle charging station program, adding trailblazing signs on the Franklin County bikeway, and planning for the construction of an East County park and ride lot. Group 4 tasks are broad in scope, and continue over a longer term, often several years. They include providing local technical assistance to Towns, improving Route 2 safety, expanding transit and rail service, bikeway and pedestrian planning, education and outreach, inter-regional planning, and scenic byway implementation.

Second, Mullaney gave an update on passenger rail service to and from Greenfield. Between August and mid-March, when the pandemic hit, the Valley Flyer was running 4 trains each weekday day (and the
Vermont was running twice daily) in the pilot program. Greenfield saw a big increase in ridership – attracting locals and pulling customers from VT, NH and surrounding areas. MassDOT reported that as of February, the Valley Flyer was achieving 95% of their ridership expectation, despite the fact that marketing for the service hadn’t yet launched. With COVID travel restrictions, there is currently one round trip per day running between Greenfield and New York City. Assuming that the full schedule will be resumed, the current thinking is that service will be back up to higher levels by March 2021, and the pilot (counting ridership) will re-start at that point. The marketing program will launch in April 2021. This will all be revisited in January 2021 to see how travel behavior is at that point and determine if the Spring restart is on track. Mullaney explained the marketing program, developed by “the watsons”, and shared images to be used on various platforms. In response to questions, Mullaney indicated that the FRCOG is investigating the possibility of a rental car agency making cars available in the Olive Street garage for visitors arriving by train, and formalizing an arrangement with a rideshare company to serve social service agency clients and tourists.

Third, Mullaney summarized projects currently underway, and those included on the 2021-2025 TIP, indicating that most Franklin County towns include one or two roads eligible for federal funding. She noted that all projects include annual fiscal constraints, and that these become more stringent as the fiscal year nears and designs and clearances are finalized. TIP Projects, by year, include:

- **2020:** Charlemont Route 2 village center (year 2 of 2); Colrain Route 112 3-way intersection; Sunderland Route 47 North Main Street; Deerfield Whately Route 5/10 resurfacing; Charlemont bridges on West Oxbow Road and Tower Road. Orange bridge on Route 2 over Route 202.
- **2021:** Buckland reconstruction of 4 roads including Conway St. (year 1 of 2); Greenfield reconstruction of Wisdom Way; Northfield Schell Bridge for bikes and pedestrians.
- **2022:** Buckland reconstruction of 4 roads including Conway St., (year 2 of 2): Charlemont bridge on East Oxbow Road.
- **2023:** Greenfield intersection improvements at Route 2 and Big Y; Deerfield bridge on Upper Road; Colrain bridge on Route 112; Conway bridge on North Poland Road.
- **2024:** Orange reconstruction of North Main Street; Northfield bridge on Birnam Road; Leverett bridge on Millers Road; Rowe bridge on Cyrus State Road; Montague bridge on South Street; Erving Route 2 resurfacing.
- **2025:** Whately rehabilitation of Haydenville Road. This project will take 2 years to complete, and involves coordination between 2 towns, 2 counties, 2 regional planning agencies, and 2 MassDOT districts.

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<th>4. Review and Approval of Slate of Nominations for FRPB 2020-21 Annual Elections</th>
<th>FRPB Nominating Committee</th>
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Basford reviewed the nominations, including 9 for the Executive Committee; one representative to the FRCOG Council & FRCOG Executive Committee, CEDS Committee, Regional Emergency Planning Committee, Route 2 Task Force, CT River Streambank Erosion Committee; none to the Transportation Planning Committee; and 5 At-Large Members.
Sluter made a motion to accept the nominations as presented, Strzegowski seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously with one abstention (Chichester).

### 5. Discussion on COVID-19 Impacts on Local and Regional Planning

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<th>J. Gross, FRPB Exec. Committee &amp; FRPB Members</th>
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J. Gross, a Realtor, shared her observations regarding recent changes to the housing market. With increased broadband coverage enabling people to work at home -- and people fleeing populated areas since the pandemic began -- many people are looking to move to the area, she said. Buyers from higher-priced markets are purchasing the limited available housing stock quickly, occasionally sight-unseen, and local buyers are losing out. Now that Franklin County are developing needed broadband infrastructure, urbanites who might previously have headed to the Berkshires will increasingly relocate here, she noted. P. Pless, also a realtor, indicated that there has been a similar change in the market for buildable land.

Gross suggested that planning boards may want to review affordable housing bylaws, which prompted discussion about tiny homes and accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Kurtz indicated that Habitat for Humanity is piloting the building of smaller homes, and may lead the way on changing bylaws. She indicated, too, that “tiny homes” are merely a re-branding of trailer homes, and that a respectful discussion on class issues is needed. Towns that have restricted trailer parks are now inviting tiny home developments, she said. Further discussion topics included the availability of land for ADUs, including back lots, their potential for increasing tax revenue, and bylaws regarding road frontage requirements. Gross referred to relevant information shared at the January 2020 FRPB meeting. Sloan noted that ADUs and tiny homes could be a September agenda item.

### 6. Other Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting/Adjourn/Public Comment

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<th>J. Lund, Chair - FRPB</th>
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None.

*Basford moved to adjourn the meeting, Travers seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 PM.*

Documents Distributed / Presentations Viewed:
- Agenda
- FRPB Minutes, January 23, 2020 – DRAFT
- Franklin Regional Planning Board Nominations 2020-21
- 2020 Franklin County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Plan
- FRPB 6-25-2020 (transportation planning updates)

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, September 24, 2020. Copies of all documents are available. Please contact Liz Jacobson-Carroll at ljc@frcog.org or 413-774-3167 x101.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Blyth, Clerk - FRPB