



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Franklin Regional Planning Board— *MINUTES*

Date & Time:	Thursday, November 4, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.
Location:	JW Olver Transit Center – Virtual Meeting via Zoom
Facilitator:	Jerry Lund, Chair - FRPB; Peggy Sloan, Planning Director - FRCOG

FRPB MEMBERS

- Jerry Lund**, Chair, Leyden, At-Large, FRPB Executive Committee
- Steven Blinder**, New Salem Planning Board
- Ted Cady**, Warwick Planning Board, FRPB Executive Committee
- Brant Cheikes**, Whately Planning Board
- Marybeth Cichester**, Colrain Planning Board, FRPB Executive Committee
- Ann-Mary Cloutier**, Deerfield Planning Board
- Ron Coler**, Ashfield At-Large
- Jennifer Gross**, 1ST Vice Chair, Wendell Select Board, FRPB Executive Committee
- Wayne Hachey**, New Salem Select Board, FRCOG Council
- Jeff Lacy**, Shutesbury Planning Board, FRPB Executive Committee
- Richard Nathhorst**, Leverett Planning Board
- Christopher Parker**, Wendell Planning Board
- Phil Pless**, Ashfield At-Large
- Jane Shaney**, Ashfield Planning Board
- Don Sluter**, At-Large Whately, FRPB Executive Committee
- Joseph Strzegowski**, Conway Planning Board
- Alec Wade**, Orange Select Board
- Chuck Washer**, Shelburne Select Board, FRPB Rep. to the REPC

FRCOG STAFF

- Peggy Sloan**, Planning & Development Director; **Beth Giannini**, Senior Transportation Planner II;
- Kimberly Noake MacPhee**, Land Use & Natural Resources Program Manager
- Liz Jacobson-Carroll**, Administrative Services Assistant

PRESENTERS/GUESTS

- Robert Cherdak**, Ashfield Planning Board

1. Introductions and Review and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes	J. Lund, Chair – FRPB & FRPB Members
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J. Lund convened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. A round of introductions followed. **R. Nathhorst moved to adopt the 9/23/21 minutes, as amended, B. Cheikes seconded the motion, and the motion passed by roll call vote with one abstention (J. Strzegowski).**

2. Presentation and Discussion on the Franklin County Pedestrian Plan	B. Giannini – Senior Transportation Planner II, FRCOG
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B. Giannini presented the recently completed Franklin County Pedestrian Plan, noting that it had been a decade since the FRCOG had last produced one. Significant progress has been made, due in part to significant funding support from the state, but mostly to work completed by towns in the region. The plan is focused on the region, but includes recommendations for each town, and aims to be concise, useful, and inspirational, Giannini said. Overall goals of the plan are twofold: first, to provide a comprehensive resource that identifies tools and strategies for developing pedestrian-related infrastructure improvements in Franklin County, and second, to inspire and encourage towns to consider pedestrian accessibility whenever feasible. She articulated specific strategies and multiple examples of resources (existing plans, ongoing programs, funding opportunities, etc.) available at the state and regional level. Two charts indicated the participation status of each Franklin County town in various pedestrian programs and initiatives. Giannini shared her process in developing the plan. Significant components of the plan include summaries of the existing walking infrastructure surrounding each town’s school and senior center; a summary of existing conditions and needs for each town; and documentation on significant recent infrastructure projects (including before and after photos); and finally, a list of region-wide recommendations for assessment, prioritization, intra-departmental collaboration, and funding. Discussion topics included the possibility of using ARPA funds for pedestrian improvement projects, the positive impact of improved sidewalks in Whately, and issues surrounding the clearing of snow from sidewalks. Giannini expects to post the Pedestrian Plan on the FRCOG website soon, and will send a link to FRPB members.

3. Presentation & Discussion on Franklin County Sustainable Stormwater Project	K. MacPhee – Land Use & Natural Resources Program Manager, FRCOG
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K. Noake MacPhee presented the Franklin County Sustainable Stormwater Management Plan addressing impacts to the local infrastructure and environment from climate change and more frequent and intense storms. Sustainable stormwater management utilizes Best Management Practices (BMPs) that capture, clean, and store water on site, close to where it falls, and in doing so, effectively reduces runoff and improves water quality. Stormwater management practices are essential to protect natural resources and critical transportation infrastructure, and to foster sustainable growth and development. The *Sustainable Stormwater Management Plan for Franklin County* utilizes a screening level approach for assessing potential stormwater BMPs for three common types of transportation construction projects: downtown revitalization, Complete Streets, and rural road improvement projects. The *Plan* references a successful collaboration between FRCOG and the Town of Orange some ten years ago, when the downtown Riverfront Park was created, showcasing the implementation of the “capture, clean and release” philosophy of stormwater management.

FRCOG has piloted the current initiative by planning three projects, each in a different town, in each of the three categories. In the downtown revitalization category, the implementation of BMPs include plans for bio-retention in a large public parking lot in Greenfield, numerous green streetscape additions to a major street redevelopment project in Orange, and the management of runoff into the residential neighborhood beside Farley Ledges in Erving. In the Complete Streets category, the communities of Northfield, Deerfield and Montague will benefit from plans for BMPs addressing flash flooding of streets, sidewalks and parking lots, elevated water tables, and stress on storm drains and sewer systems. Rural roads in Leverett, New Salem and Ashfield comprise some of the more than 400 unpaved miles in the county. These towns should benefit from BMPs that can reduce runoff and road damage that can be implemented by Highway Department staff. Noake MacPhee emphasized the

effectiveness of leveraging existing funding for larger infrastructure projects that can include low-technology, low maintenance stormwater BMPs such as adding rain gardens and street trees. Rep. Natalie Blais’ recent introduction of legislation to form a Dirt Road Working Group dovetails nicely with FRCOG’s recent receipt of funding to create a dirt road BMP toolkit (see next agenda item), Noake MacPhee indicated. [A StoryMap about the project](#) can be viewed, and the Plan and technical reports can be downloaded, from the FRCOG website. She concluded by encouraging members to contact her with concerns regarding stormwater issues in their towns.

4. Presentation & Discussion on Franklin County Regional Non-Point Source Pollution Project	K. MacPhee – Land Use & Natural Resources Program Manager, FRCOG
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K. Noake MacPhee announced that FRCOG has been awarded a Nonpoint Source Pollution Competitive Grant authorized under Section 319 of the federal Clean Water Act for implementation projects that address the prevention, control, and abatement of nonpoint source (NPS) pollution. Towns have a unique opportunity now through June 30th 2022, she said, to apply for assistance to address local waterways impaired by stormwater runoff – the biggest NPS concern in Franklin County -- from farming, forestry, suburban development, and roads. Potential projects should implement best management practices (BMPs) identified in the *Sustainable Stormwater Management Plan for Franklin County*, and may include structural improvements, sediment management, stream restoration, and non-structural efforts involving mapping, zoning, conservation, and outreach/education. FRCOG’s pilot projects on stormwater management are focusing on the watersheds of the Millers, Sawmill and Greenfield Rivers, and addressing the existence of e. coli, suspended solids, sediment, dissolved oxygen, phosphorus and fecal coliform. This work has the co-benefit of improved flood resiliency. In response to a question, Noake MacPhee said she works closely with various town officials – particularly Town Administrators and Highway Superintendents as well as members of the Select Board, the Planning Board/staff, and/or Conservation Commission. MacPhee noted that NPS pollution projects not eligible for Section 319 may qualify for funding under the Municipal Vulnerability Program, or may piggyback onto a planned and funded transportation project. There was discussion of the pros and cons of the historic practice of digging drainage ditches through farmland, with examples in Deerfield and Leyden cited. Noake MacPhee invited members to contact her with NPS pollution concerns and project ideas for their towns, and to refer other stakeholders to her as well. Lund thanked her for an informative and helpful presentation.

5. FERC Update on Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Hydroelectric Facility	P. Sloan – Planning Director, FRCOG
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Sloan indicated that FRCOG continues to participate in meetings with First Light, and to work with other stakeholders to advocate for better recreational facilities, though the confidentiality agreement prevents her from saying more. In response to a question, she noted that FRCOG has focused on the issue of erosion (in addition to the need for improved recreational facilities) in the re-licensing process, while other federal, state and local agencies have focused on issues pertaining to fish and wildlife, river flows and water quality.

6. Other Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting/Adjourn/Public Comment	J. Lund – Chair, FRPB
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Hachey moved to adjourn the meeting, Chichester seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:38 PM.

Documents Distributed / Presentations Viewed:

- Agenda
- FRPB Minutes, September 23, 2021 – DRAFT
- *Regional Pedestrian Plan for Franklin County presentation, November 4, 2021*
- *Sustainable Stormwater Management Plan for Franklin County presentation, June 25, 2021*
- *Nonpoint Source Pollution Regional Coordinator Grant (319 slides for FRPB meeting 11-4-21)*

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 27, 2022. 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