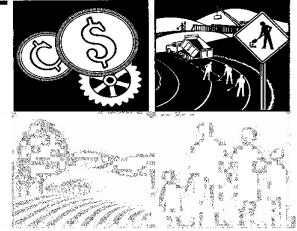


FRANKLIN REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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Executives | Director • Linda Dunlavy



NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2006

Regionalization of Services

Several regional economic analyses completed recently have suggested that the current form of government in Massachusetts is unsustainable. Municipal reliance on state aid and local property taxes is an unstable and constrained financial structure, especially with the constraints of Proposition 2-1/2. These think tank analyses have suggested that regionalizing services in order to save municipalities money must be pursued.

Franklin County is an excellent test bed for new forms of regionalization. Our region of small towns is used to working together and thinking creatively about collaborative opportunities.

A focus of the FRCOG this year will be to study regionalization opportunities. As a first step, existing and past regionalization efforts will be studied to see what worked, what didn't work, and whether the efforts saved municipalities expense or provided mandate relief. With this information, we will then begin to think about additional opportunities for regionalization. Ideas already suggested are shared assessor services; shared conservation agent services; equipment sharing or sharing of equipment maintenance; and a shared industrial park.

Throughout the year the FRCOG will be hosting forums or attending meetings of existing groups to discuss this project. The first of such meetings will be the November 15, 2006 Franklin County Selectmen's Association Meeting. Please contact us to get involved in this exciting project or for a listing of future meetings. Please contact Executive Director, Linda Dunlavy at 413-774-3167 ext. 103 or lindad@frcog.org.

Cooperative Purchasing

Winter Sand & Salt Contracts

Bids for Winter Sand & Salt were received on September 19, 2006. There were ten vendors for Sand and six vendors for Salt. Awards have been made to eight vendors for the Winter Sand and to four vendors for the Winter Salt and the contracts are in place. The contract period for these two contracts is October 1, 2006 to September 30, 2007. There are 19 municipalities participating in these two contracts and the total estimated value is \$1,210,777.

Dog Tags & Dog Licenses

Dog Tags & Licenses have been ordered and are expected to arrive around December 22, 2006. The tags will be delivered directly to participants who no longer belong to the County Dog Program. The Licenses will be delivered to Margaret Sullivan at the FRCOG and then they will be separated out into the individual orders. For more information, please contact MCPPO, Chief Procurement Officer, Margaret Sullivan at 413-774-3167 ext. 104 or bids@frcog.org.

Orange Riverfront Park Construction Underway!

The groundbreaking ceremony for the Orange Riverfront Park was held on August 18, 2006. The Orange Riverfront Park will provide an access point for canoe and kayakers to the Millers River. The park and will showcase Low Impact Development (LID) techniques such as rain gardens and pervious pavers. The Town of

Orange received Urban Self Help and Section 319 Non-Point Source Pollution grants totaling approximately \$550,000 to build the park. Construction of the first phase of the park should be completed by May 2007. FRCOG staff provided grant writing assistance to secure the funding. Peggy Sloan, FRCOG Planning Director and Kimberly McPhee, Natural Resources Program Manager attended the event hosted by the Orange Select Board, the Orange Riverfront Park Committee, and Town Administrator Rick Kwiatkowski. For more information, contact Director of Planning and Development, Peggy Sloan 413-774-1194 ext. 105 or psloan@frcog.org.



Groundbreaking Ceremony with Representative Chris Donelan and Senator Brewer's Aide



Construction of the parking area for the Riverfront Park

FRCOG To Apply For An EPA Petroleum Site Assessment Grant

The Franklin Regional Council of Governments will be applying for an U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region-wide Petroleum or Petroleum product Assessment grant. Communities in Franklin County are invited to participate in the grant if they have identified one or more sites which may be contaminated by petroleum or petroleum products. The grant, if awarded, will provide funding for an engineering firm to conduct an environmental assessment including soil and groundwater testing. Such sites might be abandoned or vacant former gasoline stations or locations where petroleum products were stored. The grant proposal will also include a public outreach and education component. The grant proposal will be available for public review and comment at the FRCOG Planning Department at 278 Main Street, 4th Floor in Greenfield between November 27 and December 6, 2006 during regular business hours (8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.). Written comments on the grant proposal will be accepted until the close of business on December 6, 2005. For more information, please contact Director of Planning and Development, Peggy Sloan at 413-774-1194 ext. 105 or psloan@frcog.org.



2006 Annual Conference

Preservation Mass Barn Task Force will hold the 2006 Annual Conference on Saturday, November 11, 2006, at the Storrowton Village Museum at the Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield, Massachusetts from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The conference is intended for those looking for practical, cost-effective ideas for restoring and rehabilitating old barns. Owners of old barns, carriage houses and outbuildings; groups and individuals interested in preserving old barns in

their communities; and members of the building trades, architects, and engineers in need of information on barn repair and timber frame construction are encouraged to attend. The program includes two program tracks. One track is intended to provide a technical focus on assessing and maintaining an old barn. The other program track is intended to provide a community focus for individuals and groups wishing to identify types of historic barns and complete an inventory of historic barns in their community.

For further information or a registration form please see www.preservationmass.org or 617-723-3383. The conference is being presented by Preservation Mass, Barn Task Force with funding provided from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Update on Progress on the Construction of the Canalside Trail Bicycle Path



A view of the former railroad bridge over the Connecticut River that is being reconstructed for trail users as a part of the Canalside Trail Bicycle Path Project.

Northern Construction Services of Weymouth, Massachusetts has been hard at work during this past construction season rehabilitating two former rail bridges along the Canalside Trail Bicycle Path. This work is being completed as part of the construction of the southern section of the Canalside Trail Bicycle Path, the portion of the path that travels from Montague City Road to McClelland Farm Road in East Deerfield. When completed, trail users will get a spectacular view of the Connecticut River from the bridge. The work on this portion of the project is scheduled to be completion in 2007.

During the 2005 construction season, Warner Brothers Construction, under the supervision of the MassHighway District 2 Office, completed the construction of much of the northern half of the Canalside Trail. A majority of the bicycle path that travels from Unity Park in Turners Falls to Montague City Road was completed during the summer and fall of 2005. A remaining section of the path and the installation of the safety railing along the canal is scheduled to be completed during this fall.

When completed the 3.27-mile off-road Canalside Trail Bicycle Path will travel from the Connecticut River Great Falls Discovery Center and Unity Park in the Village of Turners Falls in Montague to McClelland Farm Road (located off of River Road) in northeast Deerfield. The Canalside Trail is part of the Franklin County Bikeway, a regional bicycling network that travels through eight towns in Franklin County. This bicycle network consists of approximately 41-miles of both off-road and shared roadway facilities, and provides access to employment, educational, cultural and recreational sites. The proposed Bikeway travels through the towns of Deerfield, Erving, Gill, Greenfield, Leverett, Montague, Northfield, and Sunderland.

For further information, please contact Senior Transportation Planner, Elizabeth Giannini, at 413-774-1194 ext. 104 or giannini@frcog.org.

Work Begins on the Mohawk Trail East Corridor Management Plan

The Franklin Regional Council of Governments held the kick off meeting to commence work on the development of a Corridor Management Plan for the eastern portion of the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway on October 12th.

Through the development of a Corridor Management Plan and the accompanying public participation this project will seek to recognize, interpret, preserve, and promote the unique scenic, cultural, natural, and recreational resources of the eastern portion of the Mohawk Trail. The more specific purposes of this project are to: (1) identify and develop strategies to preserve the unique scenic, natural, and cultural resources along the Byway; (2) expand economic opportunities related to heritage and recreational tourism along the Byway; (3) plan for a Byway roadside educational program promoting the history of the Mohawk Trail; (4) develop a land protection program for scenic and historic landscapes along the Byway; and (5) develop a recreational program which identifies and establishes linkages to hiking trails, state forests, river access points and other cultural and recreational features along the Byway.

The study area includes Route 2 and/or Route 2A and a one half mile buffer strip along each side of the road within the towns of Greenfield, Gill, Erving, Orange, and Athol. The work on the Corridor Management Plan includes the completion of an evaluation of the road; the completion of an inventory of the historic, cultural, and natural resources; the documentation of the heritage and recreational tourism attractions and support services; an assessment of recreational resources; and an evaluation of the land use regulations and resource protection measures in communities along the Byway including an assessment of land protection measures which pertain to the prominent viewsheds. In addition, with input from the Mohawk Trail East Scenic Byway Committee and the public, implementation strategies will be developed.

By completing a Corridor Management Plan, the Byway will become eligible to apply for project funding through the National Scenic Byway Program. The next Byway Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 18th, 2007. For further information or to become a member of the Byway Committee, please contact Senior Transportation Planner, Elizabeth Giannini, at 413-774-1194 ext. 104 or giannini@frcog.org.

Study of Potential Industrial Park Sites

Through a Smart Growth Technical Assistance Grant, the FRCOG hired a group of UMASS graduate students to assess and analyze the development potential of four sites in Franklin County. In addition, two of the sites had conceptual site designs and development costs estimated. The four sites selected for the study were an 80-acre portion of the Mackin Construction property adjacent to the existing I-91 Industrial Park in Greenfield, a 22-acre portion of Montague Airport Commission property adjacent to the existing Airport Industrial Park in Turners Falls, a 100-acre portion of the Northeast Utilities property in Montague Plains area of Montague, and a 144-acre portion of the Lane Construction property off of Route 142 in Northfield. The Mackin property and Airport Commission property were selected for conceptual designs and cost estimates. For more information about this study or for a copy of the report, please contact Jessica Atwood at 413-774-1194 x101 or Peggy Sloan at x105.

Pioneer Valley Connect Receives Grant Award

The Berkshire Connect and Pioneer Valley Connect recently received a \$300,000 grant award from the John Adams Innovation Institute to further strategies to advance broadband into Western Massachusetts' underserved communities. The two-year award will allow the Connects to build upon previous work and pursue short- and long-term solutions to increase broadband access to many underserved residents and businesses in the region that currently have little or no access to high speed internet.

The mission of the Connects is to create an advanced telecommunications landscape that will have affordable, reliable and redundant high capacity broadband services available throughout western Massachusetts. Both Connects have had successes in advancing telecommunications in the region, but significant challenges remain. One-third of the 101 communities in Western Massachusetts have no access to broadband, such as DSL or cable modem technologies. In many of the communities that have broadband access, it may only be available in limited areas.

Broadband access for all communities of Western Massachusetts is essential in today's economy and is a necessary tool to support public health & safety, education, and government efficiency. For more information about the Connects or the award, go to their websites at www.bconnect.org or www.pioneervalleyconnect.org.