

“BUILDING A BETTER MONTACHUSETT”

Montachusett Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Five Year Annual Report, Evaluation and Work Plan

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Prepared by:
Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)
1427R Water Street
Fitchburg, MA 01420

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES



The Montachusett Region, settled as early as the 17th Century, began as small settlements through an era of agrarianism into the age of industrialization and now into the era of information and communications. The physical landscape can be described as “typical New England”. Our landscape differs from several urban centers with a strong presence of missed-uses (commercial, housing and in some cases industry) with well-established neighborhoods to small, sparsely populated rural communities containing “town commons”. The population and workforce have weathered changes and have adjusted their work skills to conform to the needs of the business community that drives our regional economy.

- From 2000 to 2010 the population of the Montachusett Region increased from 228,005 to 236,475 persons (approximately a 3.7% increase). Over the next 25-years the population is expected to grow from 236,475 to 255,000 persons – somewhat slower than the past forty years.
- Residents in the Montachusett region are concentrated in Athol, Winchendon, Gardner, Fitchburg, Leominster, Townsend, Lunenburg, Groton and Clinton.

- Towns are typically growing faster than their urban counterparts.
- In 2000 there were slightly more females than males in the Montachusett Region but now (2010) there are now slightly more males than females.
- In 1990 the average age of residents in the Montachusett Region was lower than the state average but equal to the national average. This is no longer true. In 2000 and 2010, the average age of residents in the Montachusett Region surpassed the state and national average age.
- As of 2010, eighty percent of the Montachusett Region's population is of working age, up from 66.1% in 2000. Population in the region grew at a faster rate than the regional job growth rate.
- The Montachusett Region's landscape is "typical New England", with hilly terrain dominated by Mount Wachusett located in the Towns of Westminster and Princeton. Three watersheds can be found in the area. These are the Nashua River, Millers River and Chicopee River watersheds.
- The number of workers increased from 2000 to 2010. Notable losses occurred in: 1. Manufacturing; 2. Wholesale; and 3. Retail. All other job sectors experienced minor growth since 2000.
- Manufacturing jobs in the region decreased by 7,777 (-29.7%) since the year 2000. But the percentage of jobs in the region in manufacturing remains higher (16.1%) than both the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (9.7%) and the Nation (10.8%).
- The unemployment rate for the Montachusett Region peaked in 2010 at 9.9%, and has slowly declined since, with unemployment at 8.2% as of 2012. However, this is still higher than the state and national averages.
- The average commuting time (one way) for a resident of the Montachusett Region (29.7 minutes) was higher than both the State (27.7 minutes) and National (25.4 minutes) averages. Today, approximately 82.66% of Montachusett residents commute to work alone in their own vehicles, with the next most popular means of transportation being carpooling at 4.73%.
- While there may exist some available industrial space in some communities which will allow local businesses to expand and remain within a community, many communities that need such space do not have the land with the necessary utilities and/or buildings available to afford opportunities for local expansions or relocations into the community by businesses.
- Brownfields must be redeveloped in order to:
 - Eliminate environmental hazards from our air, soils and water
 - Mitigate or eliminate environmental injustices.
 - Produce public benefits for communities such as new housing, jobs and open spaces.
 - Support smart growth and sustainable development initiatives.

II. METHODOLOGY: “BUILDING A BETTER MONTACHUSETT”

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) program, administered by the Economic Development Administration (EDA), was established by Congress under the *Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965*, as amended. Through later legislation, the *Economic Development Administration Reform Act of 1998*, new federal regulations were enacted to establish the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy program, replacing the previous Overall Economic Development Program (OEDP). The EDA was reauthorized through the *Economic Development Administration Reauthorization Act of 2004*, to administer and regulate programs such as the CEDS through fiscal year 2008. The EDA is in the process of reauthorization; however, the regulation that governs how the EDA operates and makes investments has already been updated as of January, 2010. This final ruling of the EDA’s *Final Regulations* clarified and established the final regulations governing the EDA.

The CEDS program was established as an economic development planning tool to assist communities, regions and states to advance economic development activities, programs, and projects. The CEDS program is designed to:

“...bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies...serve as a guide for establishing regional goals and objectives, developing and implementing a regional plan of action, and identifying investment priorities and funding sources.”

-Economic Development Administration, CEDS Flyer

Through the CEDS program, a qualifying economic development organization works to identify a region’s flexibility to adapt to the ever changing global economy, persistent economic distresses and learn to utilize the region’s assets to maximize economic opportunity that fosters growth and job creation and retention for the region’s residents. Since the CEDS process is a pre-requisite to receive EDA grant funding, the completion of the CEDS will enable the region to access funding and assistance.

A. MONTACHUSETT REGION COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (MRCEDS) UPDATE AND REPORT

Typically each summer, the MRPC completes an Annual Update of the economic planning and development work accomplished in the Montachusett Region, in accordance with the Montachusett Region CEDS. This Update is combined with an Annual Report of the accomplishments of multiple economic development entities and adjusts the MRCEDS’ vision, goals, objectives and work plan as needed to reflect changing economic conditions. Every effort has been made to create a clear and concise CEDS for the Montachusett Region.

In recent years, updates of MRPC’s “Building a Better Montachusett CEDS Update and Annual Report” have included CEDS Guidelines, promulgated by the EDA on June 1, 1999. EDA’s CEDS Guidelines will appear within text boxes and at a point size smaller than that of the MRCEDS Update and Annual Report, as such.

B. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THIS PLANNING EFFORT

1. PUBLIC MEETINGS AND INPUT

One meeting of the MRCEDS Committee was held on April 18th, 2013 where MRPC staff presented on regional and local demographic data collected to update the CEDS. Draft goals and objectives were also distributed and discussed. On February 20, 2014 a MRCEDS Committee meeting was held where participants had an opportunity to comment on this document. Members of the Montachusett Economic Development District (MEDD) were also invited to provide input into the revised document. Finally, the Planning Commissioners were asked to comment on the revised MRCEDS at its February 25, 2014 meeting of the MRPC.

2. REGIONAL SURVEYS

In Spring 2013, the MRPC distributed a survey to local officials, Chambers of Commerce, and representatives of minority groups and low- and moderate-income groups, asking them to identify local and regional economic planning and development projects that should be accomplished in order to retain and create jobs. Summaries of project requests needed, by community, are provided within the Action Plan.

III. OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF THE REGION

A. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

The Montachusett Region's earliest settlements were founded as trading outposts for the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Lancaster and Groton were settled in the mid-1600's to ensure the flow of animal pelts from the interior to Boston. By the second half of the eighteenth century, most communities in the region were settled. Originally, local economies focused on agriculture but, since farming provided a poor return, manufacturing quickly became the dominant economic force in the region.

Montachusett communities harnessed swift-flowing streams and rivers for water-powered manufacturing. The first mills were allied with agricultural production, but the nineteenth century saw the establishment of other industries, including paper, textile and woodworking industries. By the mid-nineteenth century, the production of lumber and wood products became the region's largest industry, and the City of Gardner was known internationally as a major center of chair manufacturing.

The growth of the region was accelerated by railroad connections enabling the easy transport of raw materials, finished goods and people. Communities with an industrial base prospered and expanded with the influx of foreign-born and US-born migrants. Smaller towns, such as Ashby and Hubbardston, did not see widespread growth. However, their industrialized neighbors enjoyed their heyday during the late Victorian era.

The 20th Century saw a period of economic decline that was caused by the migration of industries to southern states and exacerbated by the Great Depression. The smaller industrialized communities suffered most severely and revived most slowly. Today, the region's more urbanized communities are dominated by "mature" manufacturing industries, such as Gardner's surviving furniture mills and Leominster's surviving plastics companies. Local economies, recognizing the instability of the region's industrial base, are currently undergoing the transition away from specialization in manufacturing industries (Montachusett Regional Planning Commission, 1990). A foray into tourism in order to diversify the economy has proven successful with the creation of the Johnny Appleseed theme marketing and creation of the Johnny Appleseed Trail Association, Inc. (JATA) and the Johnny Appleseed Trail Visitors Center in Lancaster. The JATA offers higher visibility of the agri-tourism businesses such as Red Apple Farm in Phillipston and Sholan Farm in Leominster. This attempt at diversification has thus far proven to be successful providing additional jobs in the Region, adding entry-level jobs for many new workers and lessening the Region's dependence upon the manufacturing sector.

The Montachusett Region includes 236,475 people in the twenty-two communities where many jobs are held in a historically manufacturing region. This Region can boast the highest concentration of manufacturing jobs in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The region's manufacturing employment is declining following national and state trends where there

continues to be a “shift” in employment from the manufacturing sector to the services sector. Future, potential areas of job growth should be fully understood as communities plan to redevelop and create areas for business development (ex. industrial park construction and downtown redevelopment) in the future.

The region’s topography includes is dotted by high peaks such as Mount Wachusett and Mount Watatic and other rolling hills typical of the New England landscape. Three watersheds named the Chicopee River, Millers River and Nashua River, other streams, mountain paths, rail-trails, urbanized downtowns and neighborhoods, historic village centers and new housing subdivisions are connected by a local, state and interstate road system and a commuter and freight rail system linking Boston to Albany. This is the environment within which residents and visitors live, work and play. Within this physical environment private and public sector entities grapple with the issues surrounding growth and how to improve upon the economic condition of the business community and families born within and relocating to the Montachusett Region.

B. A PICTURE OF THE REGION – AN OVERVIEW

Job losses. Job losses have occurred from the manufacturing sector.

Diversification. The region continues to undergo diversification of its economy. Following national and state trends, for decades, there is an ongoing trend in the reduction in the number of manufacturing jobs and an increase in jobs in the service sector. In addition, there have been local and regional efforts to boost tourism in the region.

Emerging Markets. New types of manufacturing jobs are anticipated to be created in relation to markets yet to emerge and products related to electronics, biotechnology and nanotechnology. The types of service sector jobs that are growing are in the health care and hospitality sectors.

Existing Cluster(s). There are existing clusters of business in the region. While the area once benefited from furniture and paper manufacturing, these sectors have given way to the emerging polymers, plastics, metals fabrication and food processing facilities supported by a business services cluster (ex finance, insurance and real estate). While small in terms of real numbers, the existing and anticipated future growth in the health care, hospitality, electronics, biotechnology and nanotechnology sectors should be encouraged.

Housing Foreclosures. Foreclosure starts have been problematic nationally and statewide and the Montachusett Region is no exception with 877 foreclosures occurring in the year 2012. Foreclosures negatively impact communities in many different ways including declining city revenues and an increase in abandoned and/or dilapidated housing structures.

Transportation and Transit Related to Jobs. The Montachusett Region is benefiting by an increase in population due to the relatively lower cost of land and housing available in proximity to major and secondary employment centers in Boston, Worcester, Franklin County and Southern New Hampshire. A network of local, state and interstate roads and a commuter rail “link” connecting Fitchburg to Boston enables existing and new resident’s access to jobs in the aforementioned employment centers and to jobs within the Montachusett Region. Significant

improvements are needed to the road system to improve safety and capacity especially along State Route 2 and its feeder roads.

Extension of the Commuter Rail. Service along the Fitchburg line to North Station in Boston currently terminates at the Fitchburg Commuter Rail Station. However, there are improvements that have been initiated with an anticipated completion date of December 2014. The Fitchburg Commuter Rail Extension, Wachusett Station and Layover Facility is an expansion of passenger rail service approximately 4.5 miles west of the present terminus of the MBTA's Fitchburg Commuter Rail Line in downtown Fitchburg. The Project consists of four distinct components:

1. Construction of a new passenger station (Wachusett Station) with parking facilities accessed via Authority Drive, an existing industrial park roadway in the City of Fitchburg;
2. Construction of a new layover facility on a current gravel pit within a proposed industrial business park in Westminster;
3. Upgrades to rail infrastructure along the existing railway corridor right-of-way (ROW) owned by Pan Am Southern west of the existing terminal Fitchburg Station; and,
4. A new station track within the existing railroad ROW to access the proposed station and layover facility while enabling existing freight service to continue unimpeded by passenger operations.

Moreover, MRPC was awarded \$129,500 by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Challenge Grant Program for the development of a Wachusett Smart Growth Corridor Plan. This three year project was initiated in Spring 2012 and will study the surrounding area around the future station and engage the local community, including diverse cultural groups and underserved populations. The plan will examine various elements within this corridor area including transportation/circulation, land use, housing, economic development, open space/recreation and facilities/institutional planning. Various tasks will be conducted including; an analysis of previously completed plans, visioning/ charrettes, focus groups, drafting of plan elements, an implementation plan with smart growth zoning for the target area, and a wrap-up event.

C. MONTACHUSETT REGION ANALYSIS AND INFLUENCES

1. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

a. Population

Table 1 below shows us that from 2000 to 2010 the population of the Montachusett Region increased from 228,005 to 236,475 persons (approximately a 3.7% increase). Communities with significant population percentage increases include Ashburnham (9.6%), Templeton: (17.9%) and Lunenburg (7.3%). Only 3 communities in the Montachusett Region experienced decreases in population: Gardner (-2.6%); Leominster (-1.3%), and; Townsend (-3.0%).

According to MRPC's Regional Transportation plan, over the next 25-years the population is expected to grow from 236,475 to 255,000 persons (see Table 2 below). There will be a net increase of approximately 18,525 persons which is an increase of 7.8% over the 2010 population

for an average annual growth rate (AAGR) of 0.302%. This is a decrease in AAGR of -0.187% when compared to the growth that took place during the 40-year period from 1970-2010. During that 40-year period the population grew from 199,296 to 236,475 for a net increase of 37,179 persons which was an increase of 18.7% over the 1970 population for an AAGR of 0.429%.

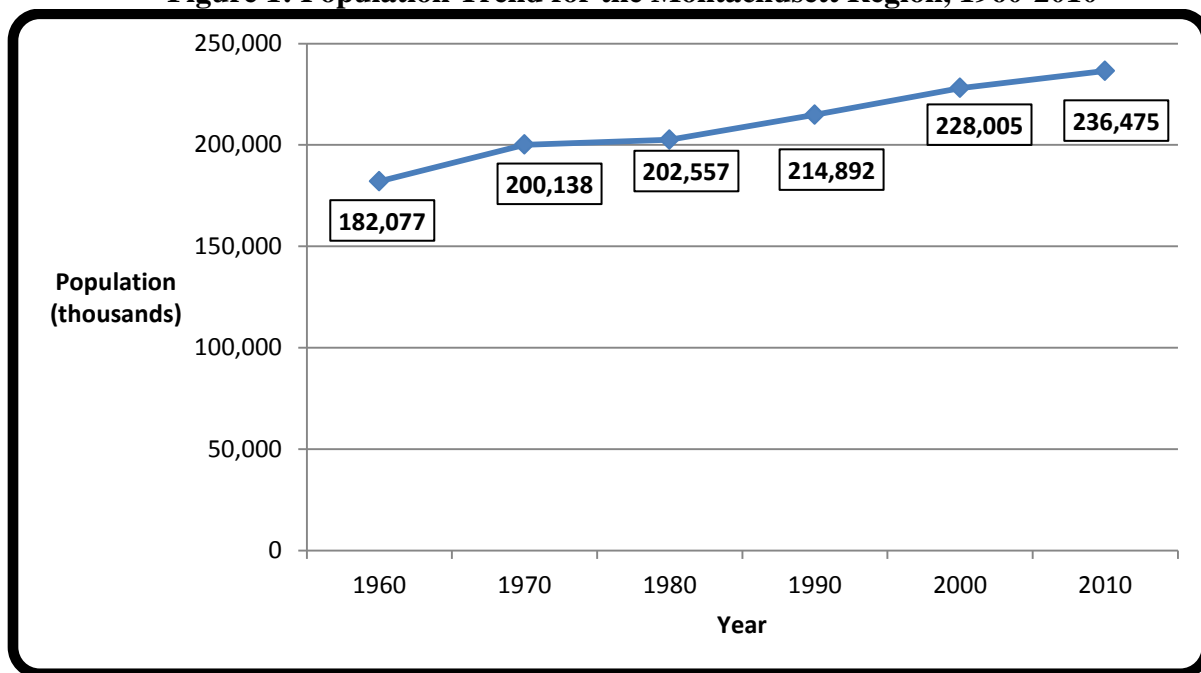
Table 1: Population Changes from 1960 to 2010

Community	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	80-90'% Change	90-00'% Change	00-10'% Change
Ashburnham	2,758	3,484	4,075	5,433	5,546	6081	33.3%	2.1%	9.6%
Ashby	1,883	2,274	2,311	2,717	2,845	3074	17.6%	4.7%	8.0%
Athol	11,637	11,185	10,634	11,451	11,299	11,584	7.7%	-1.3%	2.5%
Ayer Total	14,927	8,325	6,993	6,871	7,287	7,427	-1.7%	6.1%	1.9%
<i>Devens</i>	N/A	2,462	710	620	266	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Ayer</i>	N/A	5,863	6,283	6,251	7,287	N/A	-0.5%	16.6%	N/A
Clinton	12,848	13,383	12,771	13,222	13,435	13606	3.5%	1.6%	1.3%
Fitchburg	43,021	43,343	39,580	41,194	39,102	40318	4.1%	-5.1%	3.1%
Gardner	19,038	19,748	17,900	20,125	20,770	20,228	12.4%	3.2%	-2.6%
Groton	3,904	5,109	6,154	7,511	9,547	10,646	22.1%	27.1%	11.5%
Harvard Total	2,563	12,494	12,170	12,329	5,981	6,520	1.3%	-51.5%	9.0%
<i>Devens</i>	N/A	9,532	8,118	7,667	751	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Harvard</i>	N/A	2,962	4,052	4,662	5,981	N/A	15.1%	28.3%	N/A
Hubbardston	1,217	1,437	1,797	2,797	3,909	4,382	55.6%	39.8%	12.1%
Lancaster	3,958	6,095	6,334	6,661	7,380	8,055	5.2%	10.8%	9.1%
Leominster	27,929	32,939	34,508	38,145	41,303	40,759	10.5%	8.3%	-1.3%
Lunenburg	6,334	7,419	8,405	9,117	9,401	10,086	8.5%	3.1%	7.3%
Petersham	890	1,014	1,024	1,131	1,180	1,234	10.4%	4.3%	4.6%
Phillipston	695	872	953	1,485	1,621	1,682	55.8%	9.2%	3.8%
Royalston	800	809	955	1,147	1,254	1,258	20.1%	9.3%	.3%
Shirley Total	5,202	4,909	5,124	6,118	6,373	7,211	19.4%	4.2%	13.1%
<i>Devens</i>	N/A	957	718	686	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Shirley</i>	N/A	3,952	4,406	5,432	6,373	N/A	23.3%	17.3%	N/A
Sterling	3,193	4,247	5,440	6,481	7,257	7,808	19.1%	12.0%	7.6%
Templeton	5,371	5,863	6,070	6,438	6,799	8,013	6.1%	5.6%	17.9%
Townsend	3,650	4,281	7,201	8,496	9,198	8,926	18.0%	8.3%	-3.0%
Westminster	4,022	4,273	5,139	6,191	6,907	7,277	20.5%	11.6%	5.4%
Winchendon	6,237	6,635	7,019	8,805	9,611	10,300	25.4%	9.2%	7.2%
<i>Devens *</i>	N/A	12,951	9,546	8,973	1,017	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	182,077	200,138	202,557	214,892	228,005	236,475	10.5%	1.8%	3.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

N/A – Prior to the Devens Restructure in the 1990's, Devens military population was divided amongst the communities of Ayer, Harvard, and Shirley. Devens is no longer an active military installation with any significant population.

Figure 1: Population Trend for the Montachusett Region, 1960-2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1960-2010

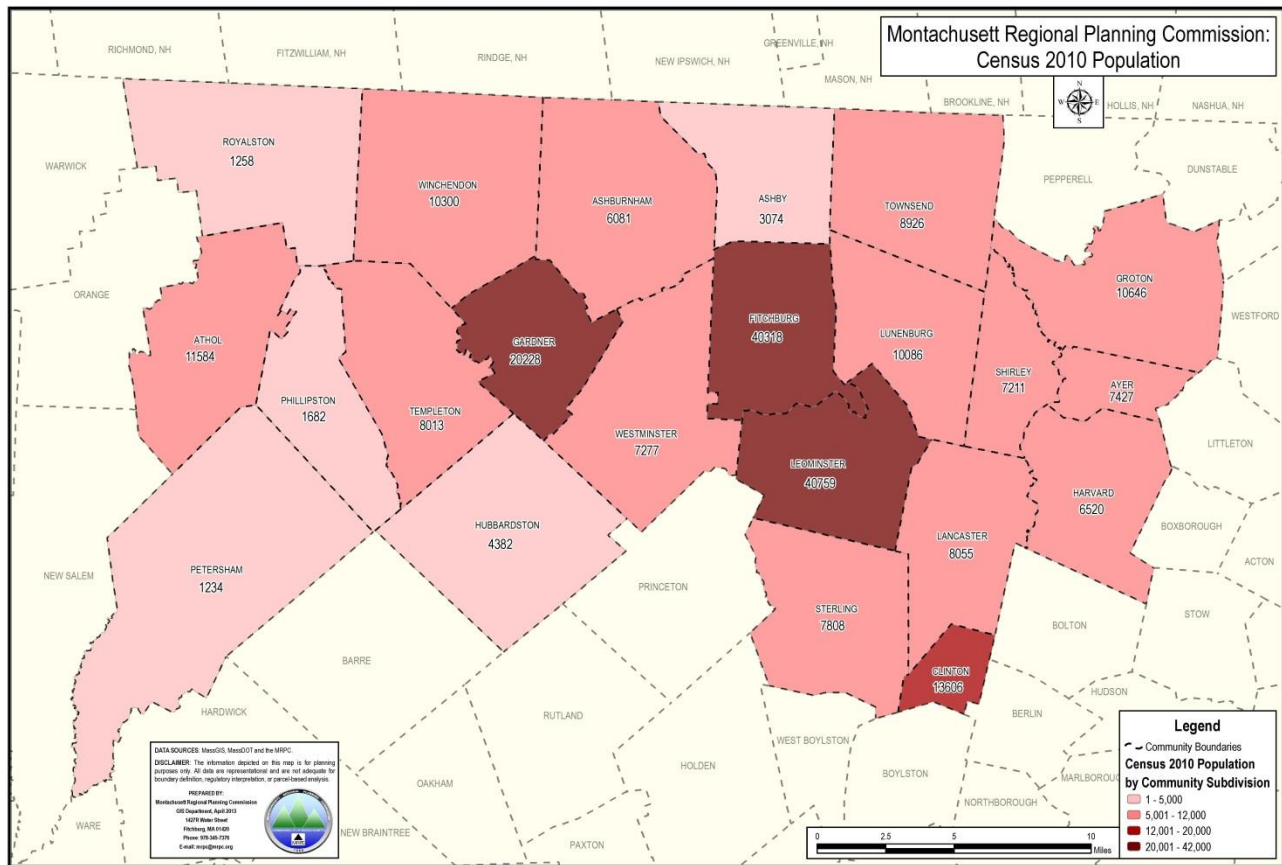
Table 2: Population Forecast

POPULATION FORECAST TO 2035							
	2000	2010	2016	2020	2025	2030	2035
Ashburnham	5,546	6,081	6,170	6,250	6,350	6,450	6,560
Ashby	2,845	3,074	3,120	3,160	3,210	3,260	3,310
Athol	11,299	11,584	11,760	11,900	12,100	12,300	12,490
Ayer	7,287	7,427	7,540	7,630	7,760	7,880	8,010
Clinton	13,435	13,606	13,800	13,980	14,210	14,440	14,670
Fitchburg	39,102	40,318	40,920	41,430	42,120	42,800	43,480
Gardner	20,770	20,228	20,530	20,790	21,130	21,470	21,800
Groton	9,547	10,646	10,800	10,940	11,120	11,280	11,480
Harvard	5,981	6,520	6,620	6,700	6,810	6,920	7,030
Hubbardston	3,909	4,382	4,450	4,500	4,580	4,650	4,730
Lancaster	7,380	8,055	8,180	8,280	8,410	8,550	8,690
Leominster	41,303	40,759	41,370	41,900	42,570	43,260	43,930
Lunenburg	9,401	10,086	10,240	10,360	10,530	10,710	10,880
Petersham	1,180	1,234	1,250	1,270	1,290	1,320	1,340
Phillipston	1,621	1,682	1,700	1,730	1,750	1,790	1,810
Royalston	1,254	1,258	1,280	1,300	1,320	1,350	1,370
Shirley	6,373	7,211	7,320	7,400	7,530	7,650	7,780
Sterling	7,257	7,808	7,920	8,020	8,160	8,290	8,420
Templeton	6,799	8,013	8,130	8,230	8,370	8,510	8,640
Townsend	9,198	8,926	9,060	9,170	9,320	9,470	9,630
Westminster	6,907	7,277	7,390	7,480	7,600	7,720	7,850
Winchendon	9,611	10,300	10,450	10,580	10,760	10,930	11,100
Total	228,005	236,475	240,000	243,000	247,000	251,000	255,000

Methodology located in APPENDIX E Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000 & 2010

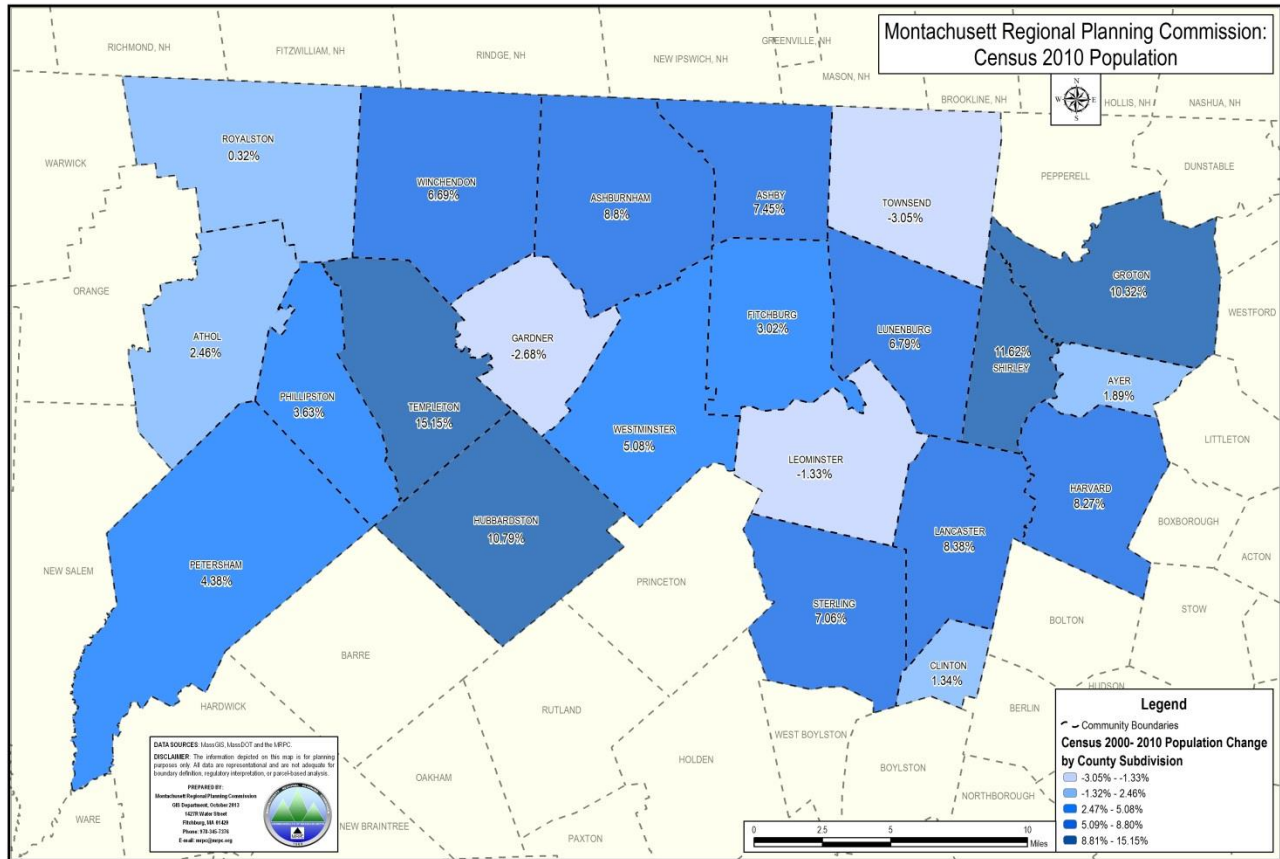
Concentration of Population in 2010

Residents of the Montachusett Region are concentrated in, from west to east, Athol, Winchendon, Gardner, Fitchburg, Leominster, Townsend, Lunenburg, Groton and Clinton.



Percent Change in Population from 2000 to 2010

The most significant growth rate, by percentage, occurred in, from west to east, Templeton, Hubbardston, Shirley and Groton. Gardner, Leominster and Townsend experienced population losses.



Gender

Table 3: Population of Males and Females by Community, 2000 & 2010

Community	2000					2010					% change '00-'10	
	Population	Female	%	Male	%	Population	Female	%	Male	%	Female	Male
Ashburnham	5,546	2729	49.2%	2817	50.8%	6081	2,992	49.2%	3,089	50.8%	8.8%	8.8%
Ashby	2,845	1417	49.8%	1428	50.2%	3074	1,226	49.7%	1,545	50.3%	-15.6%	7.6%
Athol	11,299	5830	51.6%	5469	48.4%	11,584	5,888	50.8%	5,696	49.2%	1.0%	4.0%
Ayer	7,287	3702	50.8%	3585	49.2%	7,427	3,692	49.7%	3,735	50.3%	-0.3%	4.0%
Clinton	13,435	6963	51.8%	6472	48.2%	13606	6,958	51.1%	6,648	48.9%	-0.1%	2.6%
Fitchburg	39,102	20443	52.3%	18659	47.7%	40318	20,729	51.4%	19,589	48.6%	1.4%	4.7%
Gardner	20,770	10125	48.7%	10645	51.3%	20,228	9,872	48.8%	10,356	51.2%	-2.6%	-2.8%
Groton	9,547	4816	50.4%	4731	49.6%	10,646	5,382	50.6%	5,264	49.4%	10.5%	10.1%
Harvard	5,981	2662	44.5%	3319	55.5%	6,520	2,741	42.0%	3,779	58.0%	2.9%	12.2%
Hubbardston	3,909	1932	49.4%	1977	50.6%	4,382	2,193	50%	2,189	50%	11.9%	9.7%
Lancaster	7,380	3268	44.3%	4112	55.7%	8,055	3,518	43.7%	4,537	56.3%	7.1%	9.4%
Leominster	41,303	21443	51.9%	19860	48.1%	40,759	20,991	51.5%	19,768	48.5%	-2.2%	-0.5%
Lunenburg	9,401	4746	50.5%	4655	49.5%	10,086	5,081	50.4%	5,005	49.6%	6.6%	7.0%
Petersham	1,180	586	49.7%	594	50.3%	1,234	603	48.9%	631	51.1%	2.8%	5.9%
Phillipston	1,621	806	49.7%	815	50.3%	1,682	829	49.3%	853	50.7%	2.8%	4.5%
Royalston	1,254	605	48.2%	649	51.8%	1,258	632	50.2%	626	49.8%	4.3%	-3.7%
Shirley	6,373	2680	42.1%	3693	57.9%	7,211	2,959	41%	4,252	59%	9.4%	13.1%
Sterling	7,257	3645	50.2%	3612	49.8%	7,808	3,967	50.8%	3,841	49.2%	8.1%	6.0%
Templeton	6,799	3382	49.7%	3417	50.3%	8,013	3,966	49.5%	4,047	50.5%	14.7%	15.6%
Townsend	9,198	4637	50.4%	4561	49.6%	8,926	4,513	50.6%	4,413	49.4%	-2.7%	-3.4%
Westminster	6,907	3462	50.1%	3445	49.9%	7,277	3,637	50%	3,640	50%	4.8%	5.4%
Winchendon	9,611	4845	50.4%	4766	49.6%	10,300	5,133	49.8%	5,167	50.2%	5.6%	7.8%
Total	228,005	114724	50.3%	113281	49.7%	236,475	117,502	49.0%	118,670	51.0%	2.4%	4.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000 & 2010

There were slightly more females than males in the Montachusett Region in 2000. In 2010 there were more males than females.

Age Distribution

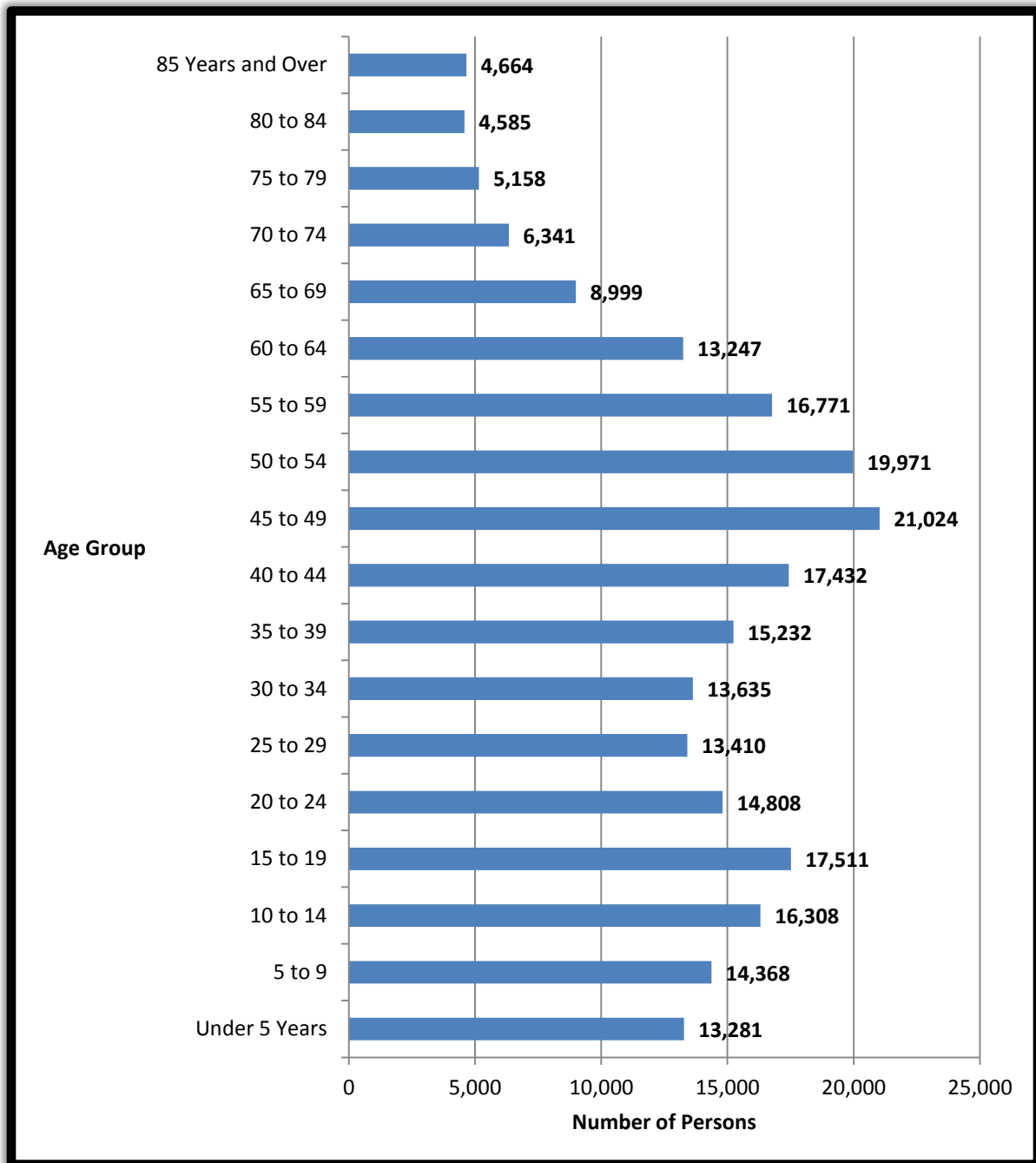
Table 4: Montachusett Median Age by Community: 1980 – 2010

Community	1980 Median Age	1990 Median Age	2000 Median Age	2010 Median Age
Ashburnham	30.4	32.9	37.3	40.6
Ashby	29.7	33.4	38.2	42.6
Athol	33.2	33.3	38.6	40.6
Ayer	25.7	29.5	34.8	38.2
Clinton	30.4	32.9	37.1	39.3
Fitchburg	30.1	31.1	34.1	34.7
Gardner	33.2	33.9	37.5	40.6
Groton	29.7	34.1	36.5	42.5
Harvard	23.3	25.0	40.6	42.8
Hubbardston	28.5	32.0	35.9	41.6
Lancaster	27.5	31.2	35.9	38.9
Leominster	30.1	32.8	36.3	40.0
Lunenburg	32.1	35.7	39.4	43.7
Petersham	33.9	39.4	43.2	48.0
Phillipston	*	32.1	36.6	42.7
Royalston	*	33.7	38	45.6
Shirley	27.6	32.2	36.6	39.2
Sterling	30.0	34.1	38.1	44.0
Templeton	32.0	34.8	38	41.6
Townsend	27.7	31.3	35.4	41.7
Westminster	31.0	35.1	38.6	42.8
Winchendon	30.3	33.2	35	38.7
Region Avg.	29.8	32.9	37.4	41.4
Mass. Avg.	31.1	33.5	36.5	39.1
National Avg.	n/a	32.9	35.3	37.2

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010

The regional population is aging, consistent with the state and nation. In 1990 the average age of residents in the Montachusett Region was lower than the state average but equal to the national average. This is no longer true. As indicated above, in 2000 and 2010, the average age of residents in the Montachusett Region surpassed the state and national average age.

Figure 2: Population by Age; 2010, Montachusett Region



Source: 2010 United States Census

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the largest age group in the Montachusett Region is 45 to 49 (21,024), followed by 50 to 54 (19,971). Looking at the chart above at the 45 to 49 age group, there is a steady decline occurring in older groups until age 85 and over. It can also be noted that there is a surge in ages 15 to 19 (17,511), followed by a decline until the 30 to 34 age group, where it begins to rise again.

Working Age Population

Table 5: Working Age Population by Community – 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010

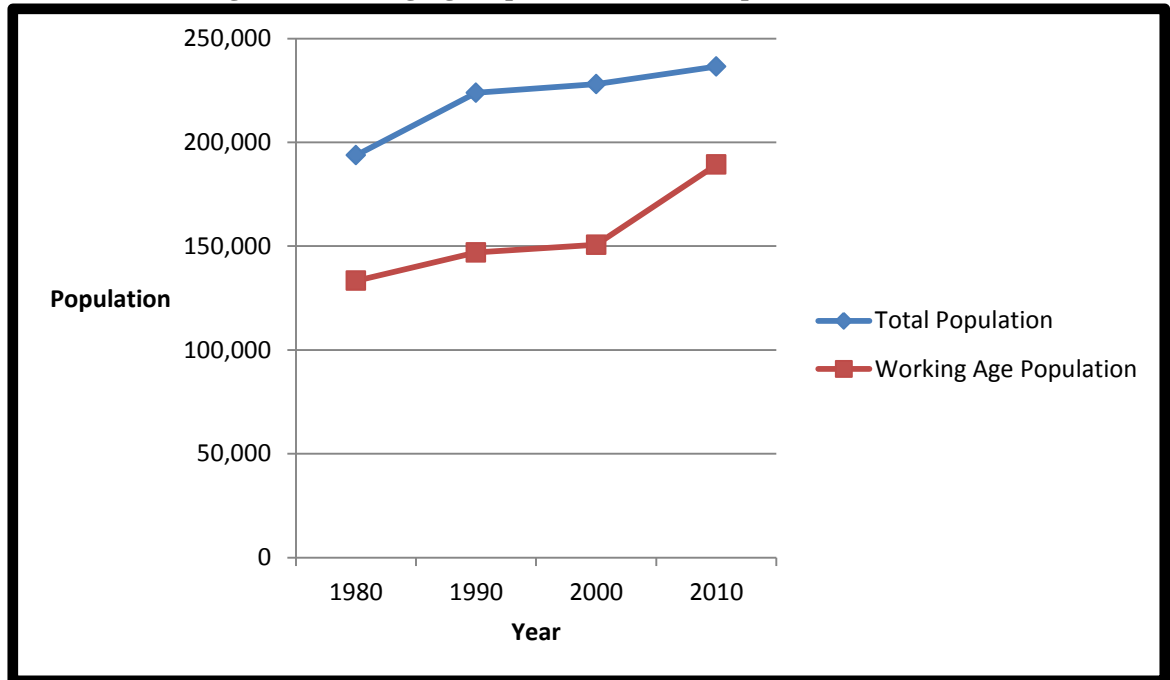
	1980 Census	Working Age Population 1980	1990 Census	Working Age Population 1990	2000 Census	Working Age Population 2000	2010 Census	Working Age Population 2010	% of Total Population
Ashburnham	4,075	2,667	5,433	3,619	5,546	4,192	6,081	4,782	78.6
Ashby	2,311	1,490	2,717	1,770	2,845	1,926	3,074	2,439	79.3
Athol	10,634	6,467	11,451	6,034	11,299	7,022	11,584	9,267	80.0
Ayer	6,993	4,874	6,871	4,738	7,287	4,985	7,427	5,990	80.7
Clinton	12,771	8,290	13,222	8,703	13,435	8,798	13,606	11,001	80.9
Fitchburg	39,580	26,097	41,194	26,304	39,102	24,897	40,318	32,195	79.9
Gardner	17,900	11,405	20,125	12,813	20,770	13,288	20,228	16,528	81.7
Groton	6,154	3,982	7,511	5,204	9,547	6,179	10,646	8,027	75.4
Harvard	3,744	8,838	12,329	8,952	5,981	4,188	6,520	5,254	80.6
Hubbardston	1,797	1,167	2,797	1,868	3,909	2,600	4,382	3,425	78.2
Lancaster	6,334	4,170	6,661	4,711	7,380	5,307	8,055	6,659	82.7
Leominster	34,508	22,818	38,145	25,603	41,303	26,730	40,759	32,610	80.0
Lunenburg	8,405	5,746	9,117	6,123	9,401	6,275	10,086	8,090	80.2
Petersham	1,024	642	1,131	734	1,180	867	1,234	1,021	82.7
Phillipston	953	595	1,485	1,001	1,621	1,108	1,682	1,351	80.3
Royalston	955	591	1,147	699	1,254	835	1,258	1,024	81.4
Shirley	4,712	3,509	6,118	4,324	6,373	4,601	7,211	6,050	83.9
Sterling	5,440	3,559	6,481	4,412	7,257	5,262	7,808	6,153	78.8
Templeton	6,070	3,945	6,438	4,181	6,799	4,442	8,013	6,350	79.2
Townsend	7,201	4,647	8,496	5,552	9,198	6,298	8,926	7,037	78.8
Westminster	5,139	3,455	6,191	4,150	6,907	4,639	7,277	5,808	79.8
Winchendon	7,019	4,343	8,805	5,457	9,611	6,208	10,300	8,144	79.1
Totals	193,719	133,297	223,865	146,952	228,005	150,647	236,475	189,205	
		68.8%		65.6%		66.1%		80.0%	
Population Increases			30,146		4,140		8,470		
			+15.6%		+1.8%		+3.7%		
Workforce Increases				13,655		3,695		38,558	
				+10.2%		+2.5%		+25.6%	

Source: Census 2010, 2000, 1990 & 1980

The working age population grew proportionately with the total population growth between 1980 to 1990 and 1990 to 2000. However, between 2000 and 2010, the working age population of the region grew by over 25% with the total population growing only 3.7%. As of 2010, 80% of the Montachusett Region's population is of working age, up from 66.1% in 2000.

*Please note that for 1980-1990 Population - Ayer, Harvard, Shirley populations include the Fort Devens Military Personnel.

Figure 3: Working Age Population vs. Total Population



2. ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

The Montachusett Region's economy is both related to and in many cases separated from the former Worcester County, Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Nation's economies with particular regard to types of businesses and jobs in the region and certain advantages and disadvantages. While the region many enjoy the highest concentration of manufacturing jobs in the Commonwealth, this sector has been experiencing decline for decades consistent with state and national trends. Regional cooperation and independent economic planning and implementation initiatives have led to the growth of the regional tourism industry (agricultural-tourism, eco-tourism and historic tourism). The Montachusett Region is within commuting distance for many people working in the metropolitan Boston, Metropolitan Worcester, Metropolitan Greenfield and Southern New Hampshire Region. The growth in regional population is clearly linked to the stabilization and growth of jobs in the home construction trade. While an increasing population has raised the levels of income, educational and skills of the regional workforce, continued housing construction has strained many services offered by municipalities such as schools and public safety.



a. Industry

From 1990 to 2000:

- At least 2,015 new jobs were created in the Montachusett Region. (However, new job growth of 1.9% did not keep pace with population growth in the region at 6.1 %.)
- A significant job gain occurred in the Services & Public Administration sector. This sector increased by 12,844 new jobs 35.5%.
- The construction trade gained 574 new jobs increasing 9.9% over the 1990 level.
- Less people were employed in the Wholesale & Retail Trade sector in 2000 than in 1990. This sector decreased by 5,186 jobs (24.3%).

- From 2000 to 2010, manufacturing jobs in the region decreased by 7,777 (-29.7%). However, it should be noted that the percentage of jobs in the region in Manufacturing remains higher than both the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (9.7%) and the Nation (10.8%).

From 2000 to 2010:

- Manufacturing jobs in the region decreased by 7,777 (-29.7%). However, it should be noted that the percentage of jobs in the region in manufacturing remains higher (16.1%) than both the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (9.7%) and the Nation (10.8%).

Table 6: Employment by Sector by Community

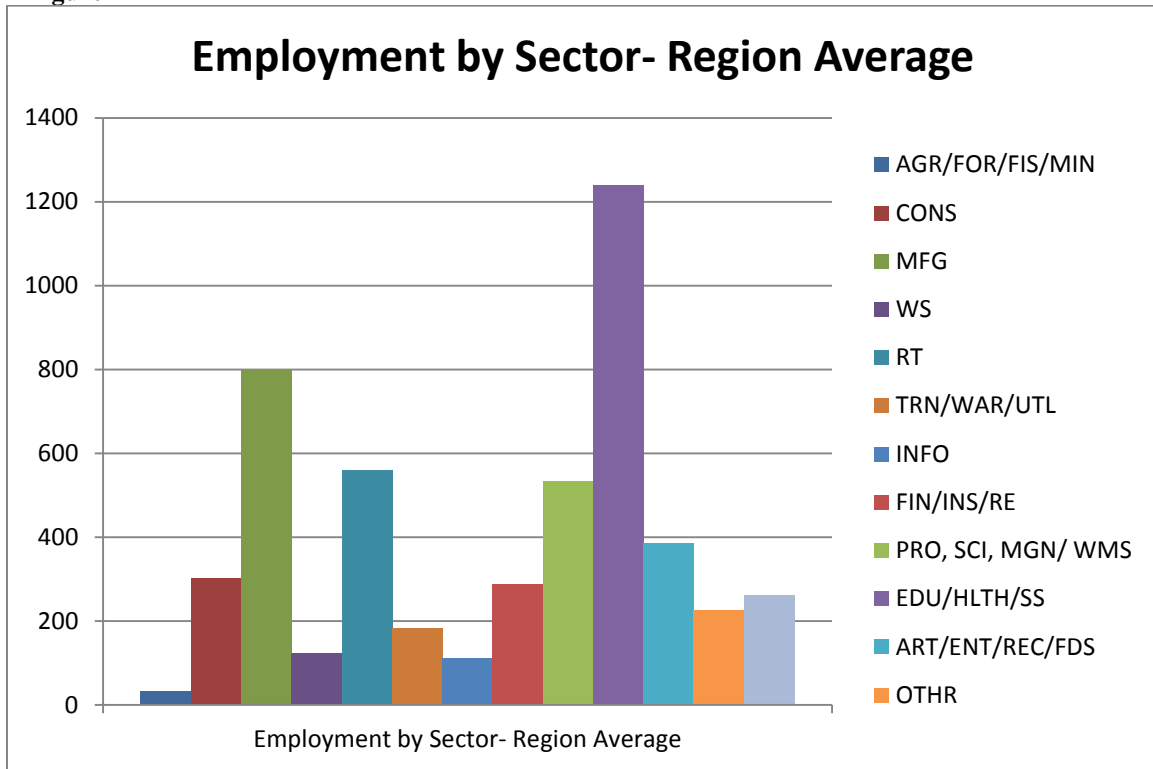
Community	AGR/ FOR/ FIS/ MIN	CONS	MFG	WS	RT	TRN/ WAR/ UTL	INFO	FIN/ INS/ RE	PRO, SCI, MGN/ WMS	EDU/ HLTH/ SS	ART/ ENT/ REC/ FDS	OTHR	PA	Total By Community
Ashburnham	15	278	461	85	231	79	67	319	347	883	255	92	241	3353
Ashby	37	121	201	94	215	91	17	51	153	479	106	63	86	1714
Athol	13	550	824	99	523	247	151	304	291	1375	315	132	178	5002
Ayer	30	196	420	53	318	146	190	181	548	836	278	172	295	3663
Clinton	27	384	1122	225	843	329	230	378	938	1457	466	364	538	7301
Devens	0	23	0	0	29	0	0	0	12	80	17	3	53	217
Fitchburg	55	1066	3096	360	2363	711	416	937	1664	4787	1845	684	714	18698
Gardner	28	529	1545	228	1059	148	76	448	611	2397	1110	304	457	8940
Groton	47	163	1030	182	406	38	135	459	1099	1146	298	210	150	5363
Harvard	9	133	426	56	139	44	123	171	527	726	51	121	87	2613
Hubbardston	20	198	430	47	250	33	90	98	203	575	117	86	109	2256
Lancaster	14	147	570	27	691	72	57	171	419	901	234	148	90	3541
Leominster	81	921	3295	584	2419	794	443	1233	1978	4897	1877	1148	1021	20691
Lunenburg	37	597	644	179	614	228	145	380	632	1281	298	326	242	5603
Petersham	34	49	54	3	29	24	14	19	90	187	49	13	34	599
Phillipston	25	95	158	32	124	49	20	21	47	242	50	33	107	1003
Royalston	6	60	98	19	57	9	6	15	52	141	42	13	51	569

Shirley	0	126	433	116	193	133	54	220	359	533	271	143	196	2777
Sterling	69	300	514	33	411	193	54	278	627	1017	212	216	241	4165
Templeton	17	241	518	43	394	298	79	222	314	998	151	200	356	3831
Townsend	61	354	846	145	599	161	72	158	505	1308	212	223	181	4825
Westminster	47	217	736	81	388	176	49	286	454	907	302	194	184	4021
Winchendon	96	206	991	159	553	177	66	279	371	1335	293	290	373	5189
Total	768	6954	18412	2850	12848	4180	2554	6628	12241	28488	8849	5178	5984	115934
Region Avg	33	302	801	124	559	182	111	288	532	1239	385	225	260	5041
Percentage Employed By Sector	0.7%	6%	15.9%	2.5%	11.1%	3.6%	2.2%	5.7%	10.6%	24.6%	7.6%	4.7%	5.2%	

Source: American Community Survey 2008-2012 5-Year Estimates

AGR	Agriculture	FIS	Fishing	MIN	Mining	SCI	Scientific
ART	Arts	FOR	Forestry	OTHR	Other	SS	Social Services
CONS	Construction	HLTH	Healthcare	PA	Public Administration	TRN	Transportation
EDU	Education	INFO	Information	PRO	Professional	UTL	Utilities
ENT	Entertainment	INS	Insurance	RE	Real Estate	WAR	Warehouse
FDS	Food Service	MFG	Manufacturing	REC	Recreation	WMS	Waste Management
FIN	Finance	MGN	Management	RT	Retail	WS	Wholesale

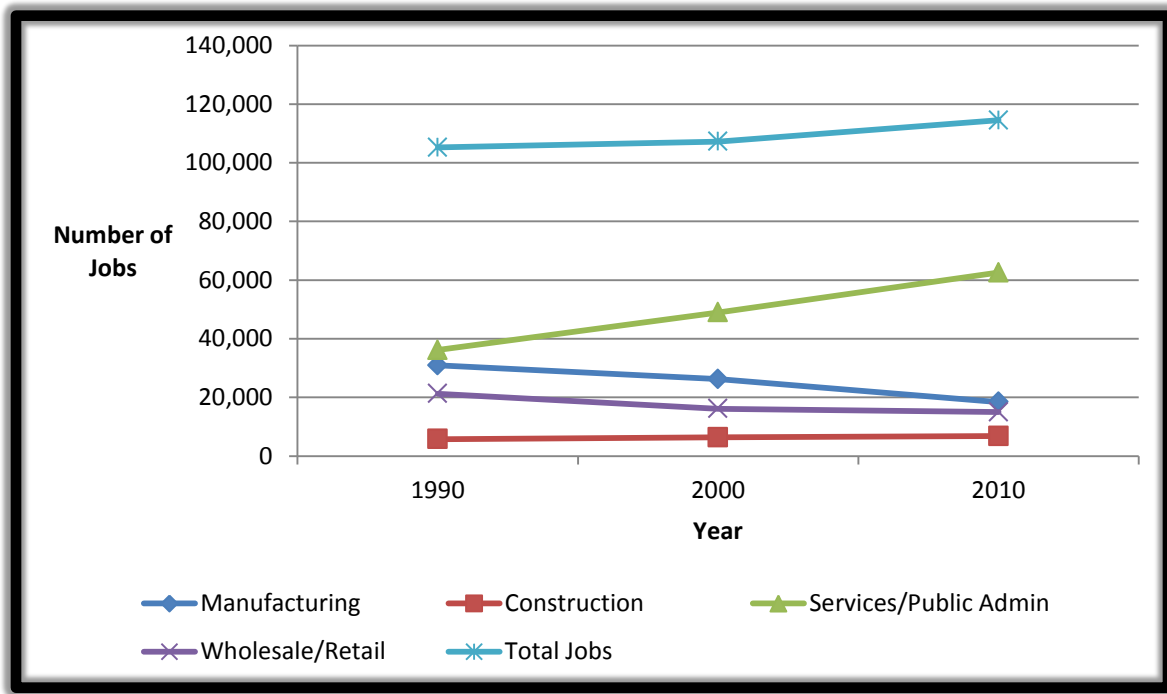
Figure 4



Source: American Community Survey 2008-2012 5-Year Estimates

According to the US Census and the American Community Survey, the number of workers increased from 2000 to 2010. Notable losses occurred in: 1. Manufacturing; 2. Wholesale; and 3. Retail. All other job sectors experienced minor growth since 2000.

Figure 5: Total Jobs with Key Employment Sectors, 1990-2010



Labor Force and Employment

Table 7: Unemployment Rate: US, Massachusetts and the Montachusett Region – 1990 – 2012 Annualized Labor Force and Unemployment Rates

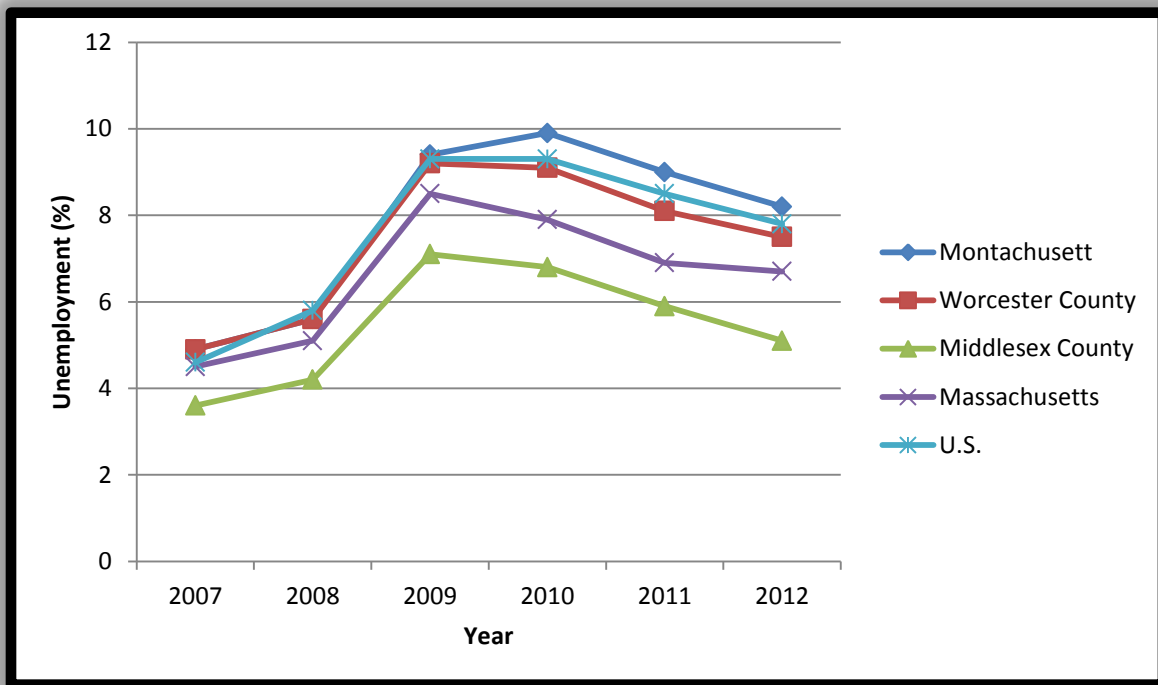
Year	Montachusett Region	Worcester County	Middlesex County	MA	US
1990	6.2%	6.7%	4.9%	6.0%	5.6%
1991	9.7%	10.0%	7.3%	9.1%	6.8%
1992	8.0%	8.9%	7.3%	8.6%	7.5%
1993	6.4%	6.8%	5.7%	6.9%	6.9%
1994	6.1%	5.6%	4.9%	6.0%	6.1%
1995	5.6%	5.3%	4.3%	5.4%	5.6%
1996	4.6%	4.3%	3.2%	4.3%	5.4%
1997	4.1%	4.0%	3.0%	4.0%	4.9%
1998	3.3%	3.4%	2.5%	3.3%	4.5%
1999	3.7%	3.4%	2.5%	3.2%	4.2%
2000	3.0%	2.9%	1.9%	2.6%	4.0%
2001	4.2%	4.1%	3.1%	3.7%	4.7%
2002	6.2%	6.1%	4.9%	5.3%	5.8%
2003	6.6%	6.2%	5.3%	5.8%	6.0%
2004	6.1%	5.6%	4.5%	5.2%	5.5%
2005	5.8%	5.2%	4.1%	4.8%	5.1%
2006	5.8%	5.4%	4.1%	5.0%	4.6%

2007	4.9%	4.9%	3.6%	4.5%	4.6%
2008	5.6%	5.6%	4.2%	5.1%	5.8%
2009	9.4%	9.2%	7.1%	8.5%	9.3%
2010	9.9%	9.1%	6.8%	7.9%	9.3%
2011	9.0%	8.1%	5.9%	6.9%	8.5%
2012	8.2%	7.5%	5.1%	6.7%	7.8%

Sources: Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training
US Bureau of Economic Analysis; Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

The unemployment rate of the Montachusett region was higher than the national rate in 1990 through 1992, 1994 through 1995, 2002 through 2007 and 2009 through 2012. The unemployment rate of the Montachusett region was higher than the state rate in 1990 through 1991 and equal to or higher than the state rate all of the years from 1994 through 2012. The unemployment rate for the Montachusett Region peaked in 2010 at 9.9%, and has slowly declined since, with unemployment at 8.2% as of 2012. However, this is still higher than the state and national averages suggesting that Montachusett residents have been more prone to layoffs when the state and national economy declines.

Figure 6: Unemployment Trends, 2007-2012



Industrial Vacancy Rate

The availability of industrial space in Fitchburg and Leominster is an asset as expanding businesses need places to grow their enterprises locally retaining the existing workforce and creating new job opportunities for those born and raised in the Montachusett Region.

However, many of the industrial buildings in the region's inventory have multiple stories. These buildings with low ceilings are not as useful to manufacturers as are single story buildings.

Several buildings in the Fitchburg-Leominster area have been converted to other uses (ex. housing). This occurred in the 1980s, prior to the creation of the Montachusett Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. In Gardner the former Heywood-Wakefield furniture-manufacturing site was converted to housing and commercial-office uses while Whitney Carriage in Leominster was also converted to housing. The current residential market downturn has put mill conversions on hold. But, when the residential market turns around, conversions will most likely continue.

As of January, 2013, the vacancy rate for modern industrial space in the Fitchburg-Leominster area is 19.8 percent, a decrease from the previous year when it was 21.6 percent. Typical modern industrial space is defined as single-story masonry/steel buildings. They include open warehouse and manufacturing facilities which generally include 5-10 percent office space with ceiling heights of at least fourteen feet. Newer buildings typically have higher clearance, closer to twenty feet, a greater proportion of office space, and also may have climate controlled manufacturing areas.

As shown below in Table 7, Leominster has a total supply of almost 6.2 million square feet of modern industrial space, representing approximately 70 percent of the Fitchburg-Leominster market. Leominster's vacancy rate is 24 percent. Fitchburg's total supply of approximately 2.6 million square feet represents about 30 percent of the market and had a vacancy rate of 10 percent as of January 2013.

No new industrial buildings were constructed in 2012 or are proposed for 2013, as of January, 2013. According to the Foster Report, sales of properties in 2012 were substantially below replacement cost. As a result, demand for new construction would be limited to specialized and high image facilities or additions to existing facilities which would otherwise be expensive to relocate. Until the price differential between existing and new construction narrows, there will be limited demand for new facilities.

Table 8: Modern Industrial Space in Fitchburg and Leominster: January 2013

City	Gross Building Area	Percent of Building Area	SF Available/Vacant	Percent Vacant
Leominster	6,177,986	70.1%	1,483,793	24.0%
Fitchburg	2,630,639	29.9%	262,399	10.0%
Combined Total	8,808,625	100.0%	1,746,192	19.8%

Source: The Foster Report – Fitchburg/Leominster Massachusetts, January 2013

As shown in Table 8 below, over 78 percent of the area's mill space is located in Fitchburg. Mill type space is older, and was generally constructed around the turn of the nineteenth century. They were originally built for single occupant businesses such as textile and paper. Many of these mills in the Fitchburg-Leominster area were later used for plastics manufacturing. They are primarily brick multi-story buildings, generally in fair to poor condition. There is a large

inventory of mill space in the Fitchburg-Leominster area. The vacancy rate for mill space as of January 2013 was 21.9 percent, an increase from January 2012 when it was 20.6 percent. Available lease space can often be obtained for low rent and often can be used to meet short term needs or by start-up users requiring lower cost space. However, with the availability of modern space at low pricing, utilization of mill space may no longer be cost effective. There are also environmental issues with mill space such as chemical saturation in the floors and older in-ground oil or chemical tanks. While remediation is possible, it can be expensive and can also result in reluctance from lenders to finance mill property acquisition. Some of these properties are classified as “brownfield” sites as discussed below.

Leominster’s base of existing mill space is declining as properties are being converted to residential or commercial use or are demolished or abandoned as they are no longer considered economically feasible to restore. Vacancy in Leominster mill space has increased in the past year as manufacturing operations have relocated to modern space for improved efficiency. Some mill space in Fitchburg is also being converted to residential housing. In Fitchburg, the greatest absorption of mill space has been as entire buildings have been converted to residential use. However, there is still a substantial supply of mill space for start-up businesses and seasonal storage. Assuming continued improvement in economic conditions, as the supply of modern properties is absorbed, there may be increased demand for mill space at least on a short-term basis.

Table 9: Mill Space in Fitchburg and Leominster: January 2013

City	Gross Building Area	Percent of Building Area	SF Available/Vacant	Percent Vacant
Leominster	1,069,351	21.2%	300,798	28.1%
Fitchburg	3,970,734	78.8%	805,460	20.3%
Combined Total	5,040,085	100.0%	1,106,258	21.9%

Source: The Foster Report – Fitchburg/Leominster Massachusetts, January 2013

b. Income Characteristics

Region-wide the median family income rose 40.6% from \$62,292 in 2000, to \$87,386 in 2010. In 2010, communities like Harvard, Groton and Sterling have the highest median family income (MFI) in the region, while the MFI in Athol, Fitchburg and Gardner are the lowest. The MFI for the region is higher than the state – it also increased at a higher rate than the state since 2000.

Table 10: Median Family Income: Region, State, United States

	Median Family Income, 1990	Median Family Income 2000	Median Family Income, 2008-2012	% Change, 2000-2012
Region Average	\$38,901	\$62,292	\$87,386	40.3%
Massachusetts	\$44,367	\$61,664	\$83,380	35.2%

US	\$35,225	\$50,046	\$64,585	29.1%
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Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census 1990 and 2000,
American Community Survey 2008-2012 5-Year Estimates

In 2000, median family income in the Montachusett Region averaged \$62,292, slightly above the statewide median family income of \$61,664. The region's 2000 median family income represents a 60% increase from the 1990 regional level of \$38,901. In 2012, the regions median family income increased by 40.3%, higher than the state (35.2%) and considerably higher than the nation (29.1%).

Median Household Income

The regional average median household income (MHI) increased 25.4% to \$54,629 in 2000 surpassing the Massachusetts (\$50,502) and National (\$41,994) averages. Since 2000, the region's MHI has risen by 37.3%, a greater rate of increase than the state (32%) and the nation (26.3%)

Table 11: Median Household Income: Region, State, United States

	Median Household Income 1990	Median Household Income 2000	Median Household Income 2008-2012	% Change, 2000- 2012
Region Average	\$43,576	\$54,629	\$75,027	37.3%
Massachusetts	\$44,367	\$50,502	\$66,658	32%
US	\$21,329	\$41,994	\$53,046	26.3%

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census 1990 and 2000,
American Community Survey 2008-2012 5-Year Estimates

Per Capita Income

In 2000, region-wide the per capita income (PCI) increased 31.5% from \$15,526 in 1990 to \$20,417 in 2000. Since 2000, PCI increased 56.3% to \$31,918. Today, communities like Groton, Harvard, and Sterling have the highest PCIs in the region, while Athol, Fitchburg, and Shirley have the lowest PCI. Per capita income for the Montachusett Region remains higher than the national average, but lower than the state average, even though it rose at a much more significant rate since 2000.

Table 12: Per Capita Income: Region, State, United States

	Per Capita Income, 1990	Per Capita Income, 2000	Per Capita Income, 2008-2012	% Change, 2000 - 2012
Region Average	\$15,526	\$20,417	\$31,918	56.3%
Massachusetts	\$17,224	\$25,952	\$35,485	36.7%
US	\$14,420	\$21,587	\$28,051	29.9%

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census 1990 and 2000,
American Community Survey 2008-2012

Figure 7: ACS 2008-2012: MFI, MHI, and PCI Comparisons

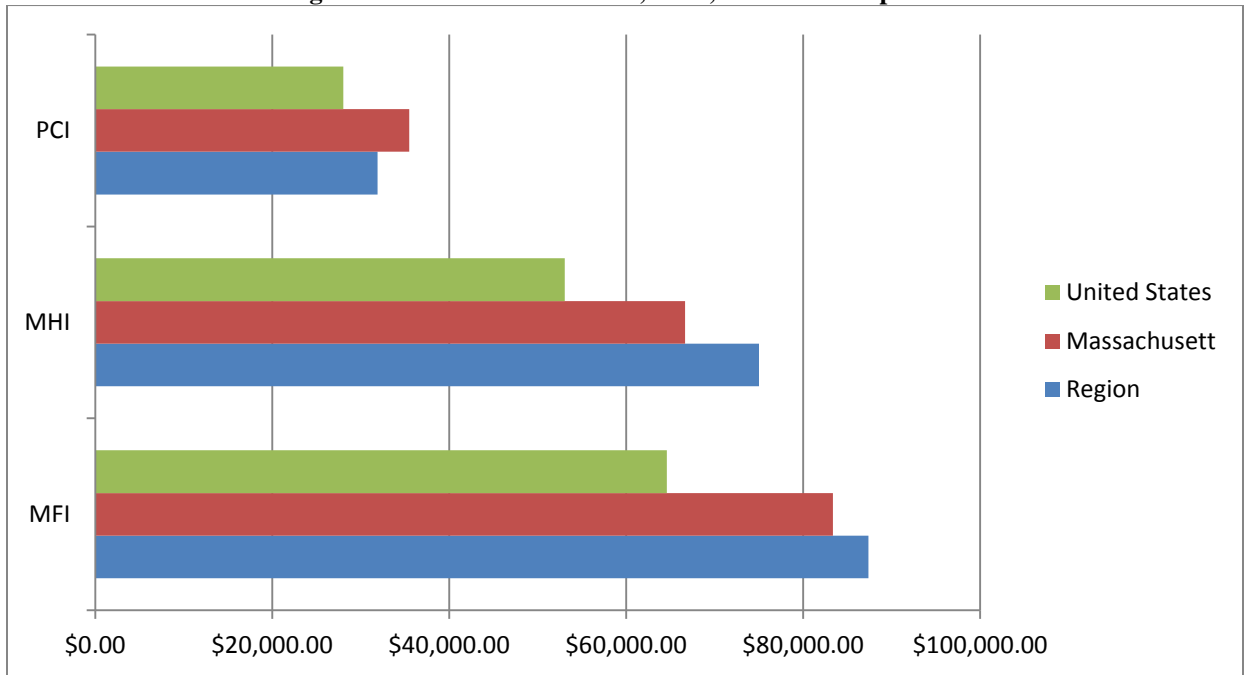
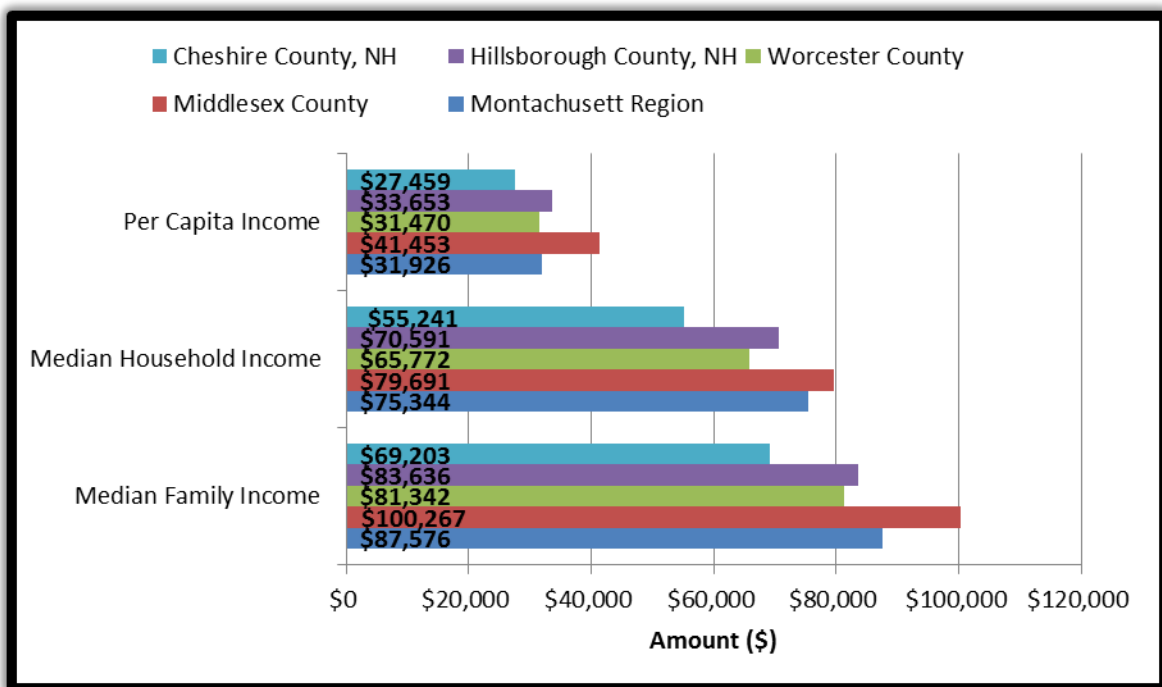


Figure 8: MFI, MHI, and PCI Comparisons with Surrounding Counties



Consumer Price Index

In the Boston-Brockton-Nashua-Worcester-Lawrence area, the “cost of living” (also known as the Consumer Price Index) increased 32.5% from 2000 to 2012.

Table 13: Consumer Price Index by Year

YEAR	ANNUAL CPI% INCREASE
2000	3.4%
2001	2.8%
2002	1.6%
2003	2.3%
2004	2.7%
2005	3.4%
2006	3.2%
2007	2.8%
2008	3.8%
2009	-0.4%
2010	1.6%
2011	3.2%
2012	2.1%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

TWELVE-YEAR CPI% INCREASE (2000-2012): 32.5%

The Median Family Income of the Montachusett Region and the state grew at rates higher than the Consumer Price Index, while national MFI did not.

**Table 14: Increase in Median Family Income
vs. Consumer Price Index: 2000 - 2012**

	% Increase: 2000-2012
Region Average	40.3%
Massachusetts	35.2%
US	29.1%
Consumer Price Index	32.5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Consumer Price Index grew at a faster rate than the MHIs for the state of Massachusetts and the nation, but did not grow at a faster rate than the MHI for the Montachusett Region.

**Table 15 Increase in Median Household Income
vs. Consumer Price Index: 2000-2012**

	% Increase: 2000-2012
Region Average	37.3%
Massachusetts	32%
US	26.3%
Consumer Price Index	32.5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Per Capita Income for the nation grew less than the Consumer Price Index, while Per Capita Income for Massachusetts grew only slightly more. The Montachusett Region's Per Capita Income significantly outgrew the Consumer Price Index.

**Table 16: Increase in Per Capita Income
vs. Consumer Price Index: 2000-2012**

	% Increase: 2000-2012
Region Average	56.3%
Massachusetts	36.7%
US	29.9%
Consumer Price Index	32.5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

b. Financial Resources

Many resources exist for businesses for the start-up and expansion of enterprises retaining and creating jobs. Samples of some of the programs available from the private and public sector lenders to businesses in the Montachusett Region include, but are certainly not limited to, the Ayer Business Loan Fund, Gardner Business Loan Fund, North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation Microloan Program and the Western Massachusetts Enterprise Fund available through the Greater Gardner and Twin Cities Community Development Corporations. Private sector lenders also exist within the region and market their products to local businesses.

The quality of the infrastructure in the Montachusett Region's communities varies. While some state- and local-funded projects are underway, much of the region's infrastructure requires reconstruction. Due to a lack of funding necessary to address all infrastructure needs, additional funding is needed to maintain and improve infrastructure supporting regional economic development.

3. GEOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS



a. Geography

As previously discussed, the Montachusett Region's landscape is mostly hilly terrain dominated by Mount Wachusett located in the Towns of Westminster and Princeton and containing the Nashua River, Millers River and Chicopee River watersheds.

b. Climatic

The area has been blessed to be able to experience four distinct seasons each year (summer, fall, winter and spring). Businesses and residents in the region can take full advantage of mountain biking, camping, canoeing, hiking, angling and picnicking in the summer, promoting tourist-related activities such as the sale of apples and pumpkins at local apple orchards in the fall, skiing, snowmobiling and ice-fishing in the winter and the re-start of outdoor activities in each succeeding spring.

c. Environment

Residents and visitors alike take advantage of the outdoor environment as described above. Some of the Region's communities can boast of public access to lakes and ponds for swimming, boating and fishing, while other towns are working proactively to improve public access to its bodies of water. The air is reasonably clear with limited airborne pollutants. However, recent housing development surges in the late 1980s and 1994 to present represents an increase in population and, correspondingly, increases in emissions from vehicles used for commuting from the Montachusett Region into the Metro-Boston Region for jobs. Air quality should be constantly monitored to identify any increases in pollutants. Lastly, within the 22 city and town region, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection has identified over 1,100 sites where contamination of the ground has occurred. The vast majority of these locations are petroleum products that were cleaned from the location of the spill almost immediately. Some of these sites have been converted to "active reuse" (ex. Putnam Place in Fitchburg [commercial office space]; West Lynde Street in Gardner, once the home of the former Conant-Ball furniture manufacturing

facility is now home to a new public library and municipal parking; and, Wasa Street in Gardner, formerly a welding shop is now the site of three new single-family homes that have been sold to families of moderate-income, increasing the supply of affordably-priced homes in the Montachusett Region). However, there remain a small number of former manufacturing sites on which are located high levels of contamination (ex. solvents, PCBs, asbestos). Some sites still lie dormant with no redevelopment plans in place (ex. former Temple-Stuart manufacturing facility in Templeton). Technical assistance must be provided to help both the public and private sectors create and implement redevelopment plans for these difficult-to-develop brownfield sites.

d. Natural Resources

The mountains, hills, water, forest lands and open spaces are both being protected for use by future generations while other natural resources are being used to support local economic activities while some natural resources are being lost. Mount Wachusett, in Westminster (highest peak in the Region), is used as a ski area in the winter and serves as a venue for outdoor festivals in the warmer months. Conversely, a former ski area on Mount Watatic, in Ashburnham and Ashby (second-highest peak in the Region), has been acquired and preserved as open space. Each community continues to deal with striking the balance between allowing the “correct” amount of development with the protection of natural resources. All Montachusett Region communities have completed Community Development Plans and/or Comprehensive Plans. Community Development Plans were completed in June 2004 for Ashburnham, Ashby, Athol, Ayer, Clinton, Fitchburg, Gardner, Groton, Harvard, Hubbardston, Lancaster, Leominster, Lunenburg, Phillipston, Royalston, Shirley, Sterling, Templeton, Townsend and Westminster while Petersham and Winchendon have completed Comprehensive Plans). Within these plans can be found the local goals, objectives and action steps needed to balance housing, commercial and industrial development with the preservation of natural resources.

e. Land Use Patterns

Multiple land uses exists within the Montachusett Region including residential, mixed use (ex. downtowns, central business districts and village centers), commercial, residential, non-permanently and permanently protected open space. Municipalities are making concerted efforts to preserve natural resources and open spaces while still fostering residential, commercial and industrial developments, as evidenced by recently completed Community Development and Comprehensive Plans.

f. Hazardous Waste Contamination and Brownfield Reuse.

The Montachusett Region has a rich history of manufacturing since the 19th Century. However, nineteen of the twenty-two communities in the Montachusett Region have “21E” or “brownfield” sites within their communities according to the Mass Department of Environmental Protection. The Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has indicated that, “Brownfields are real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. The majority of these sites are residences and small businesses with minor cleanup requirements. Others, however, are faced with significant cleanup issues prior to redevelopment.

Serious contamination, or the possibility of serious contamination, often prevents underutilized or abandoned industrial and commercial properties from being returned to active use. Therefore, they continue to sit idle, contribute little to the tax base, threaten the health, safety and welfare of the community, and visually degrade the surrounding community. Cleaning up and reinvesting in these properties takes development pressures off of undeveloped land and both improves and protects the environment.”

The MRPC through the MRCEDS process and the utilization of EDA funds has aggressively and proactively sought out funding resources to draft successful grant applications redevelop brownfields for active reuse. MRPC has successfully managed five federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Assessments ('98, '01, '04, '07, '09 – all completed, expending 100% of funds) and one EPA Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) grant since 1998. Through expenditures of \$750,000 in EPA assessment funds, MRPC has completed 58 Phase I and II ESAs jumpstarting the redevelopment process. MRPC RLF grant, totaling \$480,000, provided for the successful redevelopment of the Amory Packaging Site in Clinton which is currently a commercial warehouse. Moreover, MRPC also gained national recognition by winning the “Best Community Redevelopment Project” award for a poster presentation at the National Brownfields Conference April 2011.

Significant accomplishments have been made throughout the Region on numerous properties assessed by MRPC’s Brownfields Program. Select redevelopments include:

- Assessment activities supported the construction of a public library and 60 parking spaces in Gardner.
- Assessment activities are supporting the design / construction of a solar project in Lancaster.
- Assessment activities supported the development of a rail trail to connect the Region’s population.
- Assessment activities supported the creation of Pond Street in downtown Gardner opening up new areas for redevelopment opportunities in the Central Business District.
- Assessment activities and RLF loans supported cleanup and redevelopment at an industrial site on Stone Street in Clinton creating more than a dozen jobs and renewed tax revenue.
- Assessment activities supported the creation of two single-family affordable housing units in Fitchburg leveraging no cost labor through the Montachusett Enterprise Center, Inc.
- Assessment activities supported the redevelopment of a school into senior housing in Athol;
- Assessment activities supported the construction of three single-family affordable housing units in Gardner. These units are fully occupied and generating tax revenue;
- Assessment activities supported the redevelopment of a former gas station into a public park in Athol;
- Assessment activities supported the cleanup at Coolidge Park in Fitchburg allowing improvement projects to be completed and expanding recreational opportunities to lower income residents at one of the City’s most heavily used parks.

4. GOVERNMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

a. State and Local Law Influences

State

While some federal, state and local laws are considering “unfunded mandates”, others have been viewed as tools that should be utilized to facilitate improvements. At the state level, a number of statutes have been created, while some are undergoing scrutiny for future changes to be made, in order to provide “tools” that may be used by cities and towns to implement local improvements. In order to compile a complete list of statutory tools available to municipalities would be an exhaustive process and should be completed, at some future date, outside of the scope of the development of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). However, in the interest of informing local and federal officials of some of the statutory tools available to municipalities in order to promote sound community and economic development projects, the MRPC identifies the following of Massachusetts’ statutes as “tools” available for municipalities within the Montachusett Region that can be exercised in order to improve local economic conditions.

- Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP). In 1992, the State of Massachusetts enacted the Economic Development Incentive Program in order to stimulate investment in the state-wide economy. Private enterprises that are expanding and creating jobs can apply for tax incentives through the municipality.
- Development Initiative Financing (DIF). This statute enables municipalities to fund infrastructure improvements to attract business and/or housing development.
- Local economic development organizations can be created by municipalities or residents wishing to affect positive economic change. Some of these organizations include Community Development Corporations, Industrial Development Commissions, Economic Development and Industrial Corporations, Redevelopment Authorities and Municipal Community Planning and Development Departments.
- Community Preservation Act. The Community Preservation Act (CPA) is a tool to help communities preserve open space and historic sites, and create affordable housing and recreational facilities. The CPA was signed by Governor Cellucci and Lieutenant Governor Swift on September 14, 2000. Robert Durand, Secretary of Environmental Affairs, originally sponsored the legislation when a State Senator and championed the law's enactment.
- Chapter 43D. On August 2, 2006, Governor Romney signed a new law allowing communities to expedite permitting of commercial and industrial developments. Chapter 43D is for Designated Priority Development Sites only and a participating community must render permitting decisions on these sites within 180 days. Priority Development Sites are determined by the participating community and approved by the state. A Priority Development Site must be zoned for Commercial or Industrial Development, and the site must be eligible for the development or redevelopment of a building of at least 50,000 square feet. Advantages for a community to designate Priority Development Sites include eligibility for and priority consideration for PWED and CDAG funding, brownfields remediation assistance, and enhanced online marketing through photos, a video of the

community, and highlights within the community focusing on Priority Development Sites.

- Green Communities Act. On July 2, 2008, Governor Deval Patrick signed the Green Communities Act (the “Act”), which is a comprehensive piece of energy reform legislation promoting development of renewable energy, energy efficiency, “green communities,” and implementation of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (“RGGI”).
- District Local Technical Assistance. The District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Program, funded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, enables the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) to provide technical assistance to its 22 communities to encourage and enable municipalities to work together to achieve and/or enhance cost-effective service delivery, or to create and sustain ongoing collaboration and consultation on issues affecting municipalities, such as land use and planning for new economic and housing growth. MRPC’s DLTA program has been funded by the Commonwealth for seven consecutive years. Examples of projects conducted by MRPC include:
 - Developing a Zoning Bylaw for the regulation and development of an overlay district for solar energy facilities and equipment within the Town of Ashburnham.
 - Providing technical assistance with developing, installing, and initial municipal staff training on an electronic based unified permitting system that would coordinate and expedite permit applications before the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, building Inspector, and Board of Health.
 - Identifying, assessing and mapping Priority Development Areas for the City of Fitchburg to create Cultural Districts that will serve as catalysts for cultural development in the Montachusett Region. MRPC also provided planning assistance to the Town of Clinton in support of its Cultural District Initiative.
 - Reviewing Priority Development Areas (PDA’s) and Priority Preservation Areas (PPA’s) within the Town of Lunenburg providing a solid foundation for any future master planning efforts.
 - Working to promote economic development and help the Town of Lancaster to achieve its goals for sustainable development by combining commercial and industrial districts in North Lancaster into a single Enterprise District.

Local

Local laws vary from community to community. However, consistent among virtually all of the cities and towns in the Montachusett Region are local zoning bylaws (in the nineteen towns) and ordinances (in the three cities). Zoning laws identify the areas in which commercial and industrial enterprises may locate and expand (use zoning). “Use zoning” can be interpreted as the municipally-adopted statement of where it wishes to allow and encourage local business growth. Zoning dimension requirements are also included within zoning bylaws and ordinances.

Business, Personal and Property Taxes. As of FY 2013, nineteen of the twenty-two communities have “single tax classification” while Ayer, Clinton and Fitchburg have “dual tax classification” with differing tax rates for residential and business land uses.

Table 17: FY 2013 Residential and Business Property Tax Rates

Community	Residential Tax Rate (Personal/Property)	Commercial And Industrial Tax Rate (Personal/Property)
Ashburnham	18.85	18.85
Ashby	17.47	17.47
Athol	15.48	15.48
Ayer	13.63	27.99
Clinton	15.59	29.18
Fitchburg	19.05	25.26
Gardner	17.46	17.46
Groton	16.85	16.85
Harvard	16.68	16.68
Hubbardston	13.64	13.64
Lancaster	19.08	19.08
Leominster	17.96	17.96
Lunenburg	17.3	17.3
Petersham	16.18	16.18
Phillipston	15.56	15.56
Royalston	9.3	9.3
Shirley	15.65	15.65
Sterling	16.35	16.35
Templeton	14.12	14.12

Townsend	18.26	18.26
Westminster	18.36	18.36
Winchendon	14.93	14.93

Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, 2012

Bond ratings range from A1 to Baa1 in the Montachusett Region. The bond ratings of the communities are typically average to strong.

Table 18: MOODYS BOND RATING: 2009 & 2013

Community	Bond Rate (Moody's) 2013
Ashburnham	A1
Ashby	N/A
Athol	A1
Ayer	Aa3
Clinton	A1
Fitchburg	A1
Gardner	A1
Groton	Aa3
Harvard	N/A
Hubbardston	N/A
Lancaster	A1
Leominster	Aa2
Lunenburg	Aa3
Petersham	N/A
Phillipston	N/A
Royalston	N/A
Shirley	A1
Sterling	Aa2
Templeton	A1
Townsend	Aa3
Westminster	N/A
Winchendon	A1

Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services

Definitions of Moody's Bond Ratings can be found in the appendix.

5. SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

a. Education

Table 19: Educational Attainment, Montachusett Region, ACS 2008-2012

	High School Diploma	Associate's Degree Earned	Bachelor's Degree Earned	Graduate or Professional Degree Earned
Montachusett	30.3%	9.41%	19.06%	12.8%
Massachusetts	25.9%	7.7%	22.2%	16.8%
National	28.2%	7.7%	17.9%	10.6%

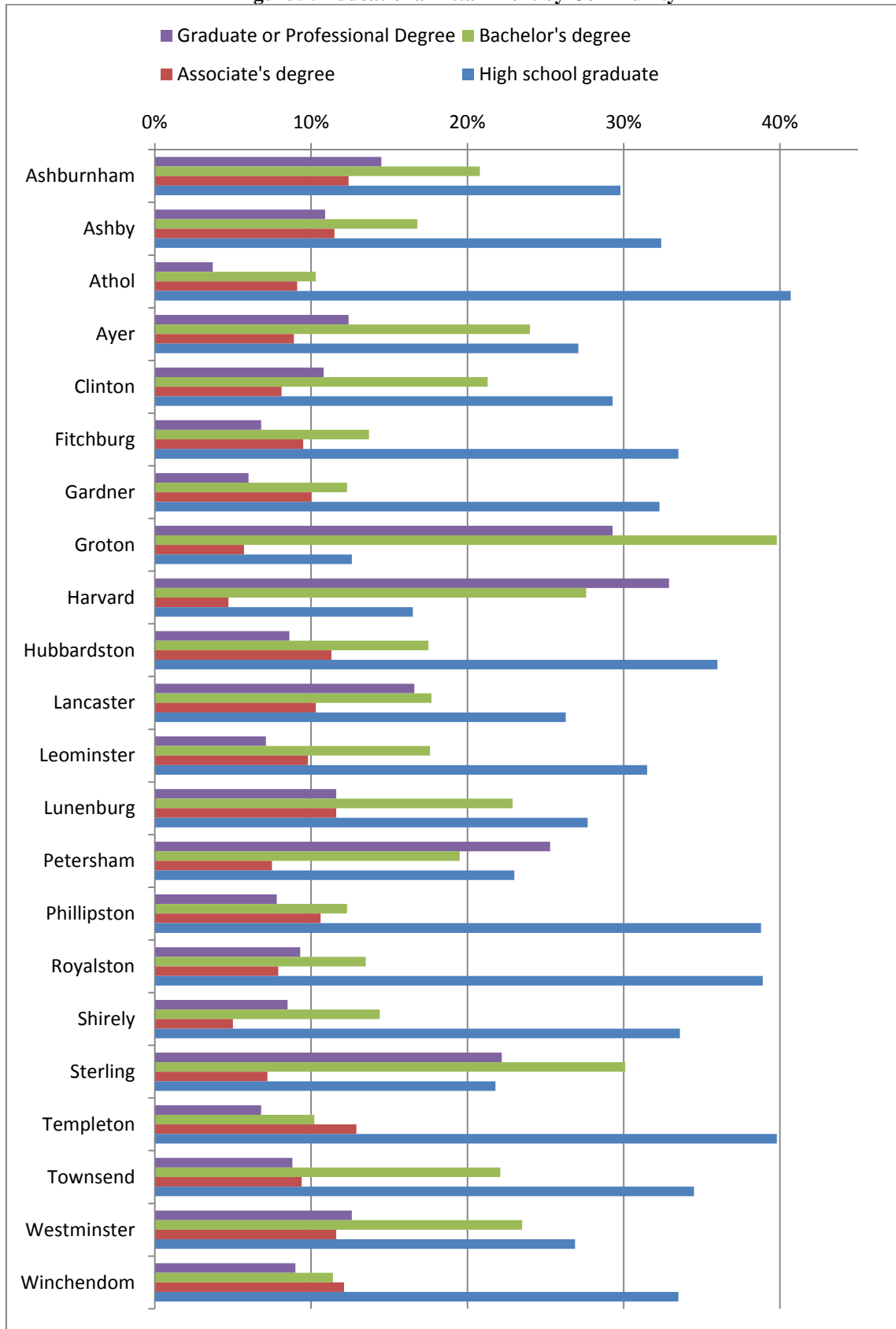
Source: American Community Survey 2008-2012

Presently, the percentage of high school graduates in the larger urban centers is higher than the region's high school diploma rate of 30.3%. The percentage of Montachusett residents with Bachelor's Degrees have increased from 18.9% to 19.06, with and Graduate/Professional Degrees decreasing slightly from 12.9% to 12.8. Although the Montachusett Region ranks higher than the national average in Bachelor's Degrees and Graduate/Professional Degrees, they are still below the state averages.

Education Systems and Workforce Development

Within the region can be found public school districts educating young persons from pre-kindergarten through high school and private schools educating residents at approximately the same age levels. The area also has new charter schools. Montachusett Technical Vocational High School is located in Fitchburg offering trade school curriculum at the high school level. Located in Gardner, Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC) offers two-year programs while Fitchburg State University offers four-year programs. In addition, there are many private sector educational operators offering training courses. The North Central Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board, Inc. promotes the economic and social welfare of the region through education, employment and training programs that increase employability of young people and adults. The new Job Corps at Devens also increases the chances of young adults to obtain work in the region.

Figure 9: Educational Attainment by Community



b. Housing

In 2010, Phillipston, Ashby, and Harvard have the highest percentage of owner-occupied dwelling units. Fitchburg, Gardner, and Clinton have the lowest percentage of owner-occupied dwelling units.

Table 20: Owner/Renter Occupied Units: 2010

Community	Units Occupied	Owner Occupied	% Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	% Renter Occupied
Ashburnham	2,148	1,928	89.8	220	10.2
Ashby	1,105	1,014	91.8	91	8.2
Athol	4,656	3,315	71.2	1,341	28.8
Ayer	3,118	1,861	59.7	1,257	40.3
Clinton	5,831	3,293	56.5	2,538	43.5
Fitchburg	15,165	8,191	54.0	6,974	46.0
Gardner	8,224	4,518	54.9	3,706	45.1
Groton	3,753	3,128	83.3	625	16.7
Harvard	1,893	1,730	91.4	163	8.6
Hubbardston	1,566	1,417	90.5	149	9.5
Lancaster	2,409	1,932	80.2	477	19.8
Leominster	16,767	9,830	58.6	6,937	41.4
Lunenburg	3,835	3,383	88.2	452	11.8
Petersham	493	428	86.8	65	13.2
Phillipston	633	582	91.9	51	8.1
Royalston	498	436	87.6	62	12.4
Shirley	2,264	1,669	73.7	595	26.3
Sterling	2,810	2,445	87.0	365	13.0
Templeton	2,882	2,393	83.0	489	17.0
Townsend	3,240	2,776	85.7	464	14.3
Westminster	2,716	2,342	86.2	374	13.8
Winchendon	3,810	2,755	72.3	1,055	27.7
Montachusett	89,816	61,366	68.3	28,450	31.7

Source: 2010 U.S. Census

Region-wide, a significant number of new dwelling units were created between 1980 and 1990 as the percentage of new units realized was 15.9% (11,946 units). The 1991 recession slowed the development of new units. However, the Montachusett Region has been experiencing continued new housing construction since 1994. Between 1990 and 2000 new dwelling units increased by another 3.9% (3,367 units). From 2000 to 2010, new dwelling units increased by 9.0%, a much higher rate than what occurred between 1990 and 2000. Only one community (Harvard, -8.0%) experienced a decrease in dwelling units, after experiencing a near thirty percent loss in dwelling units just the decade before. Communities like Winchendon (25.4%), Hubbardston (22.2%), and Lancaster (22.1%) rebounded very well from the slow development of housing units in the 1990s by posting the highest rates of increased dwelling units in the Montachusett Region by 2010.

Table 21: Number of Dwelling Units: 1980 through 2010

	Number of Dwelling Units				% Change	% Change	% Change
Community	1980	1990	2000	2010	'80-'90	'90-'00	'00-'10
Ashburnham	1,849	2,279	2,204	2,599	23.30%	-3.30%	17.9%
Ashby	802	959	1,011	1,191	19.60%	5.40%	17.8%
Athol	4,212	4,840	4,824	5,231	14.90%	-0.30%	8.4%
Ayer	2,802	2,891	3,154	3,462	3.20%	9.10%	9.8%
Clinton	4,943	5,635	5,844	6,397	14.00%	3.70%	9.5%
Fitchburg	15,347	16,665	16,002	17,117	8.60%	-4.00%	7.0%
Gardner	7,477	8,654	8,838	9,126	15.70%	2.10%	3.3%
Groton	2,249	2,774	3,393	3,989	23.30%	22.30%	17.6%
Harvard	2,807	3,141	2,225	2,047	11.90%	-29.20%	-8.0%
Hubbardston	623	1,025	1,360	1,662	64.50%	32.70%	22.2%
Lancaster	2,010	2,095	2,141	2,614	4.20%	2.20%	22.1%
Leominster	12,988	15,533	16,976	17,873	19.60%	9.30%	5.3%
Lunenburg	3,133	3,486	3,668	4,133	11.30%	5.20%	12.7%
Petersham	364	448	474	546	23.10%	5.80%	15.2%
Phillipston	304	631	739	802	107.60%	17.10%	8.5%
Royalston	358	469	526	574	31.00%	12.20%	9.1%
Shirley	1,829	2,183	2,156	2,427	19.40%	-1.20%	12.6%
Sterling	1,793	2,308	2,637	2,965	28.70%	14.30%	12.4%
Templeton	2,082	2,276	2,597	3,139	9.30%	14.10%	20.9%
Townsend	2,404	2,894	3,184	3,385	20.40%	10.00%	6.3%
Westminster	1,982	2,405	2,694	2,960	21.30%	12.00%	9.9%
Winchendon	2,636	3,349	3,660	4,199	27.00%	9.30%	25.4%
Total	74,994	86,940	90,307	98,438	15.90%	3.90%	9.0%

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census 1980, 1990, 2000 & 2010

Communities with the highest percentage of homes with mortgages include Townsend, Hubbardston, Shirley, and Templeton. Communities with the lowest percentage of homes with mortgages include Petersham, Royalston, Clinton, and Athol.

Table 22: Mortgage Information

Community	Mortgaged	% Mortgaged	Not Mortgaged	% Not Mortgaged
Ashburnham	1614	78%	454	22%
Ashby	766	75.2%	253	24.8%
Athol	2306	67.8%	1095	32.2%
Ayer	1425	78.2%	398	21.8%
Clinton	2237	70.9%	920	29.1%
Fitchburg	6441	75%	2142	25%
Gardner	3104	71.8%	1217	28.2%
Groton	2536	77.9%	720	22.1%
Harvard	1225	70.9%	502	29.1%
Hubbardston	1101	81.1%	257	18.9%
Lancaster	1360	67.7%	649	32.3%

Leominster	7260	74.3%	2508	25.7%
Lunenburg	2568	71.1%	1015	28.3%
Petersham	241	59.4%	165	40.6%
Phillipston	447	70.7%	185	29.3%
Royalston	263	66.9%	130	33.1%
Shirley	1309	83%	268	17%
Sterling	2024	81.6%	457	18.4%
Templeton	1749	74.9%	585	25.1%
Townsend	2313	82.5%	491	17.5%
Westminster	1724	72.5%	655	27.5%
Winchendon	2057	72.4%	784	27.6%
Totals	46070	74%	15850	26%

Source: American Community Survey 2008-2012, U.S. Census Bureau

There are concentrations of “affordable” housing. These concentrations can be found in Clinton, Fitchburg, Gardner and Leominster. No “affordable” housing units can be found in Ashby or Petersham.

Table 23: Subsidized Housing Units as of April 30, 2013

Community	Year Round Units 2010	Total Development Units	Total Subsidized Housing Units (SHI)	Percentage of Subsidized Housing Units
Ashburnham	2272	147	32	1.4%
Ashby	1150	0	0	0%
Athol	5148	246	246	4.8%
Ayer	3440	456	290	8.4%
Clinton	6375	551	551	8.6%
Fitchburg	17058	1660	1659	9.7%
Gardner	9064	1315	1315	14.5%
Groton	3930	375	204	5.2%
Harvard	1982	279	109	5.5%
Hubbardston	1627	52	52	3.2%
Lancaster	2544	192	107	4.2%
Leominster	17805	1456	1419	8%
Lunenburg	4037	129	129	3.2%
Petersham	525	0	0	0%
Phillipston	658	6	6	0.9%
Royalston	523	3	3	0.6%
Shirley	2417	60	60	2.5%
Sterling	2918	269	68	2.3%
Templeton	3014	475	197	6.5%
Townsend	3356	214	174	5.2%
Westminster	2826	273	86	3%
Winchendon	4088	345	345	8.4%

Source: Department of Housing and Community Development
Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI)

c. Health Services

Health care is available at local hospitals, such as Nashoba in Ayer, Health Alliance in Leominster and Fitchburg, Heywood in Gardner and Athol Memorial Hospital. HMO Clinics are also available. Fallon Health Care has such a facility in Leominster and Fitchburg. Elder care is also available at facilities throughout the region. With the aging of the population, it appears that there may be a deficit of “assisted living” facilities for senior citizens. Regional Housing Authorities continue to address this issue of the lack of “assisted living” facilities by trying to build more housing.

d. Educational/ Cultural and Recreational Facilities

Within the region can be found local and state-owned parks and museums. Samples of some of these include the:

- Fitchburg Art Museum, Gardner Heritage State Park and the Heartlands Museum in Harvard.
- Historic societies and museums can be found in most of the communities. Local history museums can be found in Athol, Fitchburg, Gardner, Leominster, Templeton, Westminster and Winchendon.
- Mount Watatic in Ashby, Oxbow Wildlife Reservation in Harvard and Lancaster, Bearsden Conservation Area in Athol, Groton-Ayer Rail-Train, Tully Mountain, Tully Dam and Tully Lake are located in Orange and Royalston, Birch Hill Reservation in Templeton and Winchendon and Mount Wachusett Reservation, Ski Area and Lodge are some examples are excellent outdoor conservation and recreation areas.
- Both the National Plastics Museum in Leominster and the Toy Town Aviation Museum in Winchendon occupy former school buildings.

e. Historic Preservation

Statewide there exists the Massachusetts Historic Commission (MHC). The MHC provides technical assistance and planning and implementation grant funds to municipal “historic commissions” and private “historic societies” in an effort to preserve and protect local, state and national historic assets in the Montachusett Region. Typically, “historic commissions” provide historic research and planning services to identify properties and potential districts having archaeological significance. “Historic societies” are quite active in the region promoting, coordinating and holding events to raise funds to continue preservation efforts such as improvements to the Athol Historic Society building which is the oldest standing meeting house in Athol.

6. INFRASTRUCTURE CHARACTERISTICS

a. Water

Both municipally-owned and controlled water collection, storage and distribution systems and private wells can be found in the majority of cities and towns in the Montachusett Region.

Municipally-owned systems are more prevalent in the more densely populated communities, such as Athol, Ayer, Clinton, Fitchburg, Gardner, Leominster and Winchendon. Other communities also have municipal water collection, storage and distribution systems.

b. Sewer

Both municipally-owned and controlled wastewater treatment facilities and private septic systems can be found in the majority of cities and towns in the Montachusett Region. Municipally-owned wastewater treatment plants are more prevalent in the more densely populated communities, such as Athol, Ayer, Clinton, Fitchburg, Gardner, Leominster and Winchendon. Other communities also have municipal wastewater treatment systems.

c. Public Safety

Every municipality in the Montachusett Region has a local police force. In addition, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts provides a state police force. Each community has volunteer and/or full-time paid fire-fighting forces. Rescue and ambulance services vary from community to community from municipally-funded to volunteer services.

d. Communications and Closing the Digital Divide: Broadband Infrastructure, Adoption, and Digital Inclusion in Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MassTech) is a public economic development agency collaborating with industry, academia, and government to foster growth of the Massachusetts innovation economy. MassTech has three major divisions - The Innovation Institute, the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI), and the Massachusetts eHealth Institute (MeHI). The primary mission of the MBI is to extend affordable, robust, high-speed Internet access to homes, businesses, schools, libraries, medical facilities, government offices and other public places across Massachusetts, with a focus on the hard-to-serve areas of western and central Massachusetts. In addition, MBI is working to promote statewide broadband adoption and digital inclusion particularly in low income and low adoption communities.

Broadband Infrastructure

The Massachusetts Broadband Institute recently completed construction of ***MassBroadband 123***, a 1,200-mile fiber-optic middle mile network that will bring high-speed internet access to over 1,200 community anchor institutions in more than 120 unserved and underserved communities in Western and Central Massachusetts. The project, funded through state and Federal funds, connects community facilities such as schools, town halls, public safety facilities, community colleges, libraries, and health care institutions to the open- access network. ***MassBroadband 123*** is a long-term infrastructure project that will create a foundation for future growth. In 2013, Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick proposed \$40 million in bond funding for the MBI to help develop public-private last mile solutions. The legislative proposal has been approved by the Commonwealth's House of Representatives, with funding increased to \$50 million, and is currently under review in the State Senate. If authorized, build out of last mile projects is expected to span multiple years and will require matching private and public funds.

Broadband Adoption, Technology Adoption, and Digital Inclusion

MassTech also supports broadband adoption, technology adoption, and digital inclusion across the Commonwealth through the following initiatives:

MassVetsAdvisor: Launched by the MBI in 2012, MassVetsAdvisor is a web based resource portal which connects Veterans to Federal, state, and non-profit benefit programs.

The Small Business Technical Assistance Program: Pilot program launched by the MBI in collaboration with regional Community Development Corporations, this program provides small businesses in all regions of the Commonwealth with financial assistance to incorporate internet technology to support business growth.

Massachusetts eHealth Institute (MeHI): Works to drive adoption of critical health technologies, supporting the health care community to implement electronic health record and health information exchange technology. MeHI's major initiatives include the Medicaid Electronic Health Record (EHR) Incentive Operations program, the Regional Extension Center (REC) program, the Health Information Exchange (HIE) program, and the eHealth Economic and Workforce Development initiative. Broadband access and adoption is essential to successful implementation of the Health Information Exchange and Electronic Health Records.

The Broadband Adoption and Digital Inclusion Research Study: A project initiated by MBI which investigates internet and digital technology adoption trends across Massachusetts. Preliminary research indicates that 1.6 million Massachusetts residents do not use the internet, even in locations where high speed internet service is available. Low adoption rates correlate to educational attainment, household income, and age, with the lowest rates of high speed residential internet and computer use primarily in urban and Gateway Cities (mid-sized municipalities in the Commonwealth which have been provided special legislative-focus for economic development based on lower than average median incomes and educational attainment levels).

Target populations for broadband adoption and digital inclusion programs include: Low income households, adults with high school education or less, Hispanic and African American households, English as a second language learners, seniors, people with disabilities, small businesses, and municipalities. The Digital Inclusion Study will be completed in May 2014 and will include recommended model programs to provide accessible, affordable internet access; affordable computer equipment, software, and tech support; digital education for residents, businesses, and municipalities; and assistive technology for people with disabilities.

Access to technology and digital education for all residents, businesses, and institutions is essential for success in a global economy and a digital world impacting every aspect of daily life including:

- Educational Success and Lifelong Learning
- Workforce Readiness/Employment
- Business Development
- Health Care Information and Delivery

- Access to Governmental and Essential Services
- Social and Civic Engagement

e. Electrical distribution systems and renewable energy

Virtually all homes and businesses receive their electricity through a regional power grid. Private and municipally-owned electrical utility companies distribute the power to the Montachusett Region. These include National Grid, Unitil, Sterling Municipal Lighting Plant, Templeton Municipal Lighting Plant, Groton Municipal Lighting Plant, and Ashburnham Municipal Lighting Plant.

On December 11th, 2008 a winter storm brought significant sleet and a heavy layer of ice to the Montachusett Region resulting in downed trees and power lines, blocked roads, and large scale power outages. Within the region, there were over 43,264 households and businesses without power. In fall 2009, the MRPC was awarded a one year financial assistance award in the amount of \$125,360 from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration's Philadelphia Office to conduct an Emergency Back-up Power Sources Evaluation for all the communities within the Montachusett Region. The project was completed in fall 2011 and consisted of a comprehensive Emergency Back-up Power Sources Evaluation throughout the Montachusett Region *and* a region wide analysis of the Electric Grid Structure. MRPC also completed an EDA funded Regional Energy Plan for the Montachusett Region and most recently the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) and the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) were awarded \$188,512 in grant funds in fall 2012 from the federal Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration to develop a plan for the Siting of Renewable Energy Facilities for the Montachusett Region and the Northern Middlesex Region. The anticipated completion date for this project is June 2014.

The MRPC should make every effort to continue to provide technical assistance to local officials, businesses, and others with funding opportunities, and the review and possible adoption of zoning bylaws and ordinances concerning the installation of energy conversion systems.

f. All transportation modes

Today, approximately 82.66% of Montachusett residents commute to work alone in their own vehicles, with the next most popular means of transportation being carpooling at 4.73%.

Table 24: Means of Transportation by Community

Community	Car, Truck, or Van/ Drove Alone	Car, Truck, or Van/ Carpoled	Public Transportation (excluding taxi)	Walked	Other Means	Worked From Home
Ashburnham	2921 (90.9%)	192 (6%)	30 (.9%)	10 (.3%)	0	60 (1.9%)
Ashby	1483 (87.6%)	48 (2.8%)	4 (.2%)	25 (1.5%)	0	133 (7.9%)
Athol	3984	531	33	74	31	282 (5.7%)

	(80.7%)	(10.8%)	(.7%)	(1.5%)	(.6%)	
Ayer	2974 (82.8%)	123 (3.4%)	200 (5.6%)	43 (1.2%)	24 (.7%)	226 (6.3%)
Clinton	5984 (83.2%)	644 (9%)	37 (.5%)	165 (2.3%)	104 (1.4%)	260 (3.6%)
Fitchburg	14301 (77.8%)	1924 (10.5%)	506 (2.8%)	812 (4.4%)	250 (1.4%)	584 (3.2%)
Gardner	6973 (79.7%)	978 (11.2%)	35 (.4%)	360 (4.1%)	180 (2.1%)	220 (2.5%)
Groton	4382 (83.7%)	244 (4.7%)	87 (1.7%)	48 (.9%)	82 (1.6%)	391 (7.5%)
Harvard	1932 (77.2%)	103 (4.1%)	41 (1.6%)	37 (1.5%)	34 (1.4%)	356 (14.2%)
Hubbardston	2227 (89.2%)	169 (7.6%)	12 (.5%)	0	0	59 (2.6%)
Lancaster	2867 (82.7%)	274 (7.9%)	31 (.9%)	101 (2.9%)	10 (.3%)	185 (5.3%)
Leominster	17340 (84.9%)	1674 (8.2%)	279 (1.4%)	439 (2.2%)	141 (.7%)	542 (2.7%)
Lunenburg	4698 (84.8%)	354 (6.4%)	54 (1%)	42 (.8%)	94 (1.7%)	297 (5.4%)
Petersham	454 (77.1%)	45 (7.6%)	12 (2%)	21 (3.6%)	0	57 (9.7%)
Phillipston	867 (88.4%)	63 (6.4%)	4 (.4%)	7 (.7%)	5 (.5%)	35 (3.6%)
Royalston	505 (91%)	31 (5.6%)	0	8 (1.4%)	4 (.7%)	7 (1.3%)
Shirley	2238 (81.4%)	86 (3.1%)	196 (7.1%)	7 (.3%)	68 (2.5%)	155 (5.6%)
Sterling	3642 (88.1%)	281 (5.8%)	42 (1%)	0	37 (.9%)	131 (3.2%)
Templeton	3104 (83.1%)	417 (11.2%)	36 (1%)	51 (1.4%)	19 (.5%)	107 (2.9%)
Townsend	4240 (88.3%)	254 (5.3%)	28 (.6%)	41 (.9%)	8 (.2%)	230 (4.8%)
Westminster	3289 (83.9%)	185 (4.7%)	0	21 (.5%)	39 (1%)	386 (9.8%)
Winchendon	4173 (83.7%)	459 (9.2%)	9 (.2%)	167 (3.4%)	83 (1.7%)	94 (1.9%)
Montachusett	93884	5374	315	281	224	759
	82.66%	4.73%	0.28%	0.25%	0.20%	0.67%

Source: American Community Survey 2008-2015 5 year Estimates

Table 25: Mean Travel Time to Work: 2000-2012

Community	2000	2008-2012
Ashburnham	31.4	35.9
Ashby	31.4	32.7

Athol	24.6	27.2
Ayer	28.3	29.5
Clinton	24.0	25.8
Fitchburg	23.2	26.7
Gardner	24.1	26.1
Groton	33.5	34.1
Harvard	32.2	32.0
Hubbardston	35.5	36.2
Lancaster	26.2	26.9
Leominster	25.5	26.0
Lunenburg	26.0	32.0
Petersham	29.6	37.5
Phillipston	29.4	32.0
Royalston	35.1	35.4
Shirley	30.9	33.0
Sterling	28.8	31.6
Templeton	25.2	27.6
Townsend	36.4	34.4
Westminster	28.7	27.3
Winchendon	29.5	34.5
Montachusett Region	29.1	29.7
Massachusetts	27.0	27.7
U.S.	25.5	25.4

Source: U.S. Census 2000, American Community Survey 2008-2012, U.S. Census Bureau

The average commuting time (one way) for a resident of the Montachusett Region (29.7 minutes) was higher than both the State (27.7 minutes) and National (25.4 minutes) averages.

Within the Montachusett Region are located a local, state and interstate road network, a commuter rail line from Fitchburg to Boston operated by the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) and two active municipal airports in Fitchburg and Gardner. There are no rivers used for the navigation of goods. Rivers and streams are, however, used by canoeists, kayakers and anglers for outdoor activities.

IV. REGIONAL OUTLOOK AND POSITION

A. STRENGTHS

Assets of the Montachusett Region identified by the attendees at public meetings include:

- The existence of a strong education, worker training and development system exists and works proactively with the business community to identify training needs and develop curricula needed by the commercial and industrial enterprises in the region.
- The regional economy has been working toward diversification.
- Cost of housing is good, relative to Metro-Boston residents who commute out of the region.
- Available manufacturing space.
- Plastics, metals, paper and food processing manufacturing cluster supported by the services industry and augmented by sufficient and growing retail and service market and a growing tourism trade.
- The North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce (NCMCC) has been providing assistance to plastics companies helping them transition from old to emerging markets.
- The area boasts both four-year and two-year colleges (Fitchburg State University and Mount Wachusett Community College).
- Fitchburg State University and the Mount Wachusett Community College are connected with Worcester State University and Quinsigamond Community College through a four-college consortium.
- Availability of Labor Force.
- Lower housing costs than east of the Montachusett Region.
- Good highway access, in eastern Montachusett Region, to Interstate 495, I-190 and State Route 2.
- Good public and private schools in the region.
- The Health Care Industry in North Central Massachusetts (contained within the Montachusett Region) and Central Massachusetts (mostly Worcester County) is the largest employer in the Central Massachusetts Region.
- Interstate 190 and State Route 2 are assets.
- \$20 Million in improvements to State Routes 12, 13 and John Fitch Highway.
- Safety improvements to State Route 2 are being implemented and must continue.
- The area has good commuter rail and bus and train connections, but higher speed passenger rail access between the Montachusett Region and Boston is needed.
- Access to education is good.
- Municipal airports in Fitchburg and Gardner and private airports in Shirley and Sterling.
- Quality of life is high.

B. WEAKNESSES

Liabilities of the Montachusett Region identified by the attendees at public meetings included

- The continued increase of manufacturing outside of the United States contributes to the decline of manufacturing in the Montachusett Region and Massachusetts.
- A connector to Downtown Fitchburg is still needed.
- Non-local ownership of businesses.
- High energy costs.
- A large percentage of the regional economy has been based upon manufacturing. During periods of economic decline manufacturers are usually hit first and recover last.
- High cost of housing for the regional population that works in the Montachusett Region.
- Transit: Lack of a reverse commute for those living in the Metropolitan Boston area accessing jobs in the Montachusett Region.
- Perceptions and/or realities of crime in Fitchburg were viewed as a liability to the redevelopment of Downtown Fitchburg.
- State Route 2 “pinching out” from a two-lane to a one-lane highway in Phillipston; State Routes 2 and 12 intersection during the peak early morning and afternoon commuting times is dangerous due to increased volume and the lack of safe roadways and intersections.
- High-speed internet access has improved in urban areas. However, the lack of high-speed communication infrastructure and the lack of services available from the telecommunications companies in the less urban areas inhibit regional business growth for large businesses as well as home-based entrepreneurs.

C. POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITIES

Potential opportunities identified by attendees at public meetings include:

- Convert State Route 2 to an Interstate Highway, opening the door to more funding for needed improvements.
- Devens has another 3 to 4 million square feet of developable space. The Devens Enterprise Commission’s goals are to create 8,000 jobs at the site.
- The “Boston commuters” moving into the Montachusett Region may be “Ideal” potential employees helping companies in the region grow in the future.
- Quality of life – recreation and family oriented events. Family-friendly region. Good network of state parks.
- Not built out. Have time to plan for the future. Preservation of open space and planned development.
- We may be in a prime location between Manchester International Airport, T.F. Green International Airport, Logan International Airport, Hartford International Airport and

Bedford Airport. However, providing consistent passenger transportation at Worcester Airport would aid residents and businesses in the Montachusett Region.

D. POTENTIAL LIABILITIES

Risks associated with not implementing plan identified are as follows:

- An increase in urban decay.
- The region may become stale and growth may stagnate.
- We may experience more sprawl in the rural communities if we do not balance development with preservation and if we do not strive to meet the ten Massachusetts' Sustainable Development Principles.
- The steady loss of manufacturers and manufacturing jobs provide less wealth distributed to residents through employment. The region is threatened with a decline in job and pay quality and quantity. Lack of training the workforce with enhanced skills for new and emerging employment opportunities will contribute to a decline in spending power.

E. RESOURCES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

There are multiple resources available for the future economic development of the Montachusett Region. For the purpose of this Strategy, we define the necessary resources as human, education, land and buildings, financial capital, physical infrastructure, laws and regulations and a supportive administrative infrastructure.

- Human. Sufficient human resources must exist and continue to be available to the business community so that labor can be supplied to produce the products and services that help to fuel the regional economy.
- Education. The continued education of the residents must be sustained to enable the work force to adapt to changing market conditions. The existing educational system must continuously be enhanced to help educate the work force in accordance with the needs of the business community.
- Land and buildings. Land and buildings for business use are available to facilitate the expansion of and relocation of existing businesses retaining and generating jobs in the Montachusett Region. Brownfields, tax title, and municipally-owned parcels should be examined for their potential benefit to the economy of the municipalities and region.
- Natural Resources. Many natural resources are used to support local economic activities (ex. wind, rivers and biomass for energy, forests for forestry, sand for mining and rivers and streams for eco-tourism). A balanced use of our natural resources should be promoted so as to not squander the resources available.
- Financial capital. Businesses need financial capital to aid with growth opportunities. Programs exist both in the private and public sectors to aid commercial and industrial enterprises to finance new and ongoing operations generating and retaining jobs.
- Physical infrastructure. The physical infrastructure (ex. roads, bridges, water and wastewater systems, electricity and high speed communications) must be constantly

monitored and improved to aid the business community with its shipment of goods and services and workers to access places of employment.

- Laws and regulations. Some laws and regulations exist both to aid businesses to expand. Others are viewed as hurdles to business growth. The public and private sectors should work together to create laws and regulations that fuel growth, and minimize the number of extraneous laws and regulations that inhibit improvements to local and regional economies.
- Supportive administrative infrastructure. Both the public and private sectors have staff resources available to assist businesses to expand (ex. staff from Chambers of Commerce, local municipal community and economic development entities and other non-profit organizations). Consistent marketing of the availability of services to the business community and use of these staff resources by the business community are needed to encourage growth.
- Sustainable development. Economic development initiatives should be in conformance with local, regional and state economic development plans and as many Massachusetts Sustainable Development Principles as possible.

F. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

A significant number of key organizations exist to plan for and implement economic planning and development projects in the Montachusett Region. They are as follows:

1. Municipal Organizations

- Ashburnham. Industrial Development Commission and Downtown Focus Committee.
- Athol. Community Development Office, Industrial Park Commission and Economic Development and Industrial Corporation in the formative stage.
- Ayer. Community Development Office and Industrial Development Finance Authority.
- Clinton. Community Development Office.
- Devens. Devens Enterprise Commission.
- Fitchburg. Community Development and Planning Office, Industrial Development Commission and Redevelopment Authority.
- Gardner. Community Development and Planning Office and Redevelopment Authority.
- Lancaster. Industrial Development Commission.
- Leominster. Community Development and Planning Office and Industrial Development Commission.
- Sterling. Industrial Development Commission.
- Westminster. Economic Development Committee and Industrial Development Commission.
- Winchendon. Community Development Office and Redevelopment Authority.

2. Non-profits

- Greater Gardner Community Development Corporation, Inc.
- Twin Cities Community Development Corporation, Inc.

- Montachusett Opportunity Council, Inc.
- Montachusett Enterprise Center, Inc. An affiliate of the MRPC.
- North Central Massachusetts Community Reinvestment Act Coalition.
- North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation.
- North Quabbin Community Coalition, Inc.

3. Downtown Organizations

- Athol. Athol Downtown Partnership, Inc.
- Ayer Downtown Business Association.
- Clinton. Uptown, Inc.
- Fitchburg Downtown Business Association.
- Gardner. Square Two Association, Inc.
- Leominster Downtown Business Association.
- Shirley. Shirley Village Partnership, Inc.

4. Chambers of Commerce

- Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce, based at Devens.
- Greater Gardner Chamber of Commerce, based in Gardner.
- North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce, based in Leominster.
- North Quabbin Chamber of Commerce, based in Athol.
- Wachusett Chamber of Commerce, based in Clinton.

5. Education and Job Training Partners

- Cushing Academy (Ashburnham) and Groton School (Groton) (private schools).
- Four College Consortium: Fitchburg State University, Mount Wachusett Community College, Worcester State College and Quinsigamond Community College.
- Leominster Center for Technical Education and Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical High School.
- North Central Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board, Inc.
- Shriver Job Corps, Devens.
- University of Massachusetts, Lowell at Devens Campus.
- Pre-K, Elementary, Middle and High Schools in virtually all communities in the Montachusett Region.

Local businesspersons' associations also exist in many of the communities.

6. Montachusett Enterprise Center, Inc.

The Montachusett Enterprise Center, Inc. (MEC) was created in 2003 in order to plan for and implement projects leading to the creation of affordable housing and job opportunities for people in the Montachusett Region. MRPC planning services have been delivered through the MEC, an affiliate of the MRPC, in an effort to identify affordable housing development sites in the region.

Accomplishments include being designated as an eligible receiver by the Attorney General's Office. As a receiver MEC can be authorized by the Housing Courts to take temporary possession of abandoned/foreclosed properties which pose a threat to public health and safety, make necessary repairs, and recover its costs through an expedited foreclosure auction process. MEC is exploring three potential receivership properties in Athol, Sterling, and Leominster. Board voted to approve purchase of 30 Powers Mill Road, Phillipston, for re-development as two units of affordable senior housing. Purchase is to be from surplus CDBG funds. MEC will own and operate the housing project.

MEC has been approached by a local developer who wishes to donate three building lots to MEC, on condition they be used for affordable housing projects, preferably in cooperation with the work-study program of Montachusett Regional Technical Vocational High School.

7. Montachusett Brownfields Group (MBG)

MRPC has administered five Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Site Assessments Grants and one EPA Revolving Loan Fund grant. Utilizing funding from the Site Assessment grants, our member communities were able to complete 52 brownfield site assessments. The Revolving Loan Fund Grant provided for the successful cleanup and redevelopment of the Former Amory Packaging Site in Clinton. The site is currently a commercial and warehouse/distribution facility.

The Montachusett Brownfields Group is comprised of local lenders, lawyers, private and public sector funding entities, realtors, developers, community-based organizations, planners and community and economic developers. The Group plays a significant role in decisions concerning brownfield assessments and redevelopment and brownfields education. The Brownfields Group meets on an as needed basis.

8. Montachusett Energy Advisory Committee (EAC)

The Montachusett Energy Advisory Committee was formed in 2010 initially to provide oversight and guidance to the development of a Plan for the region regarding Emergency Back Up Power Sources Mitigation. This plan was in response to the devastating Ice Storm of 2008. The Committee is comprised of elected officials, municipal staff, utility providers, business owners and interested citizens. The above mentioned plan, the Montachusett Region Energy Plan, and a study now in process (The Siting of Renewable Energy Facilities) were funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration. The Committee meets on an as needed basis and also holds a variety of workshops on energy ranging from Virtual Net Metering to Wind Energy Siting and Hydropower.

9. Wachusett Smart Growth Steering Committee

The Wachusett Smart Growth Steering Committee guides MRPC in the development of the Wachusett Smart Growth Corridor Plan. MRPC was awarded grant funding through U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Developments Community Challenge Grant Program to produce this Plan.

The Wachusett Corridor is a 2 ½ mile radius around Wachusett Station which is scheduled to be completed December 2014. The Committee provides the communities of Fitchburg, Westminster, and Leominster with an opportunity to study and plan for the continued improvement and development of the Wachusett corridor, including the linkage of various means of transportation, and planning for future land use, housing, economic development, and open space and recreation opportunities in and around this area. The committee is comprised of municipal officials, representatives from neighborhood agencies, minority groups, businesses, regional transit authority, trail coalitions, and conservation commissions.

10. Local Hazard Mitigation Planning Teams

A Hazard Mitigation Plan Update is currently being prepared by the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) with assistance and input from its 22 member communities and Devens and their local Hazard Mitigation Planning Teams. The plan update is being funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and the MRPC.

The Federal Disaster Mitigation of Act of 2000 requires all municipalities that wish to be eligible to receive FEMA hazard mitigation grants to adopt a local hazard mitigation plan and to update the plan every five years. A community plan identifies actions to help alleviate disaster conditions in the future. Hazards Mitigation Plan will also allow communities to become eligible for federal grant programs, including the post-disaster Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and the pre-disaster Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA). Communities can find detailed information on grant opportunities at the following link <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/agencies/mema/hazard-mitigation/>

V. PLAN FOR PROGRESS

A. VISION STATEMENT FOR THE MONTACHUSETT REGION

Community and economic planning and development proponents within the Montachusett Region will advocate and support all economic development activities including but not limited to:

- education
- workforce development
- marketing
- brownfields redevelopment
- renewable energy development
- commercial and industrial land development
- transit programs and transportation improvements that support economic development initiatives
- housing improvements and programs that provide a supply that is sufficient for the region's workforce

We strive to preserve and balance open spaces enhancing the quality of lives of residents, while making the area more attractive for business owners and employees considering business relocations and expansions.

B. COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2013 UPDATE REGIONAL STRATEGIES

- **Strategy #1 – Maintain and expand economic development opportunities within the Montachusett Region by continuing work with MRPC communities to promote and sustain economic development.**
- **Strategy #2: Continue working with partners that enhance economic development opportunities.**
- **Strategy #3: Advance high-quality infrastructure and community improvements to support development, redevelopment and revitalization of the built environment.**
- **Strategy #4: Preserve existing housing and encourage the development of new affordable housing for the workforce needed by the businesses in the community.**
- **Strategy #5: Market our region.**
- **Strategy #6: Promote public safety and health initiatives with in the region.**
- **Strategy #7: Continue to develop a green regional economy.**
- **Strategy #8: Encourage entrepreneurship, home grown businesses, and diversity within the region.**

- **Strategy #9: Help develop new cluster or business sector development in underutilized buildings or areas established for business uses.**
- **Strategy #10: Sustain and enhance educational opportunities.**

Strategy #1 – Maintain and expand economic development opportunities within the Montachusett Region by continuing work with MRPC communities to help promote and sustain economic development.

Objectives:

- MRPC will utilize the current framework with member communities to coordinate and encourage community economic development by educating communities to promote understanding of implementing integrated planning and economic development.
- Educate and encourage member communities to advocate streamline permitting as part of the permitting process. Encourage expansion of the local tax base by informing citizens about appropriate strategies for doing so.
- Strengthen business district revitalization efforts in Montachusett Region communities.
- Encourage businesses that are compatible with adjacent land uses and resource protection concerns.
- Identify the types of businesses we want to encourage to locate to and expand within the region.
- Educate the public about the benefits of industrial expansion, i.e., expansion of the local property tax base positively increasing local tax revenues and creating jobs within the Montachusett Region.

Strategy #2: Continue working with partners that enhance economic development opportunities.

Objectives:

- Support the efforts of organizations that provide non-traditional financing for businesses and self-employed individuals.
- Support the activities of organizations in the region that provide technical assistance and networking opportunities to small businesses.

Strategy #3: Advance high-quality infrastructure and community improvements to support development, redevelopment and revitalization of the built environment.

Objectives:

- Upgrade and maintain the transportation system to enhance the movement of goods and commuters.

- Continue to identify walkability and connectivity issues within the region.
- Expand and maintain essential services for business growth.
- Support utilities' efforts to design the extension of natural gas pipelines into the Northeast United States and the Montachusett Region to provide an alternative, clean fuel for business and residential purposes.
- Access and use of high speed internet, technology, and digital knowledge is essential to success in a global economy and a digital world. The following cross-cutting objectives support state and regional infrastructure, economic and workforce development, business growth and development, educational attainment, delivery of governmental and essential services, and civic engagement goals.
- Foster the deployment of telecommunications infrastructure to enhance access to global networks and to address gaps in broadband availability and service through public-private telecommunications infrastructure initiatives, including but not limited to:
 1. Open access broadband initiatives such as MassBroadband 123 and the Open Cape project
 2. Public computer centers and public internet access points
 3. Affordable internet access and computer equipment programs
- Integrate internet adoption, technology adoption, and digital education into economic and workforce development, business development, education, housing, health care, and open government policy including but not limited to:
 1. Foster digital literacy and technology education in schools, colleges, community based education, business assistance and development, accessible technology, workforce training, and online learning and public education programs.
 2. Promote e-commerce, e-health, and e-government services and initiatives.
 3. Promote affordable housing development wired for internet access.

Strategy #4: Preserve existing housing and encourage the development of new affordable housing for the workforce needed by the businesses in the region.

Objectives:

- Advocate for the development of affordable housing in the region.
- Support programs such as home buyer education that promote and enable home ownership for low/moderate income persons in the region.
- Increase funds for financial assistance programs for home buyers with low/moderate incomes.
- Improve the quality of rental housing in the region.
- Support housing rehabilitation programs to retain the region's housing stock.
- Develop models supporting the development of affordable housing and homeownership through activities that may include transferring publicly-owned housing to owner-occupants or providing tax incentives to new homeowners.
- Develop a plan to address the shortage of housing for low/moderate income persons.
- Increase support for foreclosure mediation within the region.

Strategy #5: Market our region

Objectives:

- Explore and support new ways to aggressively market the region for manufacturing, agriculture and tourism.
- Protect and preserve natural resources as such resources draw people to the region promoting ecotourism and agri-tourism opportunities into the region.
- Increase and promote Cultural and Arts events and activities within the region since these assets draw people to the region enhancing tourism opportunities.

Strategy #6: Promote public safety and health initiatives with in the region

Objectives:

- Support efficient public and private strategies for waste management throughout the region that include recycling programs and efforts to regionalize waste management.
- Encourage health care professionals to become involved in regional health care issues.
- Support and assist in developing a regional approach to the utilization of health facilities geared to meet the needs of inhabitants of member communities while protecting their health, safety, and welfare.
- Support the formulation and implementation of a service development plan that addresses: a) improvement of the health status of the communities; b) maintenance and promotion of good health; c) necessity and benefits of primary care; d) home care; e) community/neighborhood-based services; f) long-term care; g) locally-based insurance program; and h) high tech care.
- Support the development of a comprehensive review of the physical plant assets of the health care delivery system in member communities.
- Establish a community-based health center.
- Investigate issues such as food security and food systems within the region.
- Expand recreation opportunities within the region.
- Support, improve and promote locally-based community health systems and food systems.

Strategy #7: Continue to develop a green regional economy

Objectives:

- Encourage renewable energy with communities and businesses to help off-set high energy costs while promoting job creation.

Strategy #8: Encourage entrepreneurship, home grown businesses, and diversity within the region.

Objectives:

- Support and assist communities seeking funds for revitalization efforts.
- Support local initiatives to encourage people to shop locally.
- Encourage communities to conduct retail market analyses to determine the demand for services and products within the region's retail districts.
- Support and encourage historic preservation efforts in communities.
- Support collaborative marketing of the region's business districts.
- Support the development of a comprehensive signage program for business districts.
- Support the establishment of on-going revitalization efforts through the use of public private partnerships.
- Support efforts to retain and recruit downtown businesses.
- Advocate business clustering strategies as a tool for business district revitalization efforts.
- Promote the neighborhood business districts.
- Support business association and other organizational efforts to recruit businesses into central business districts.
- Support other entities' efforts to market the region as the place to live, work, start and grow businesses, and visit.
- Examine the urbanization of North Central Massachusetts in a regional context.
- Look beyond manufacturing as a staple of the region's economy keeping diversity in mind for the viability of the region's economy. Some fields to explore include medical, education and some advanced manufacturing including high-end polymers and nanotech, biotech industries.
- Encourage business development to correlate with the Massachusetts Sustainable Principals.

Strategy #9: Help develop new cluster or business sector development in underutilized buildings or areas established for business uses.

Objectives:

- Promote creative reuse of underutilized, existing industrial buildings utilizing "brownfields" laws, regulations and funding on the federal, state and local levels where there real or perceived issues concerning site contamination act as a deterrent to the development of those sites.
- Educate and offer technical assistance to communities on the most appropriate uses of existing industrial properties.
- Support local efforts to use zoning as an industrial development tool.
- Support the retention and expansion of existing manufacturing firms.

- Support the recruitment of new manufacturing firms to the region.
- Support efforts for local industrial incubators where needed.
- Support the creation of a technology center to assist in research and development and the transfer of technology to existing and new industries.
- Promote the creation of a supplier's network and encourage local businesses to buy locally.
- Support the redevelopment of the Rear Main Street Corridor consistent with the City of Gardner Urban Renewal strategies.
- Advocate re-development of Putnam Place on Boulder Drive in Fitchburg.
- Facilitate the Region's assessment, remediation and redevelopment of buildings and sites by supporting regional initiatives and efforts to address contaminated properties in the region
- Create a mechanism for the redevelopment and reuse of underutilized mills and other buildings and sites.

Strategy #10: Sustain and enhance education opportunities

Objectives:

- Support curriculum appropriate to the needs of the local business community.
- Support School-to-Work, tech prep programs and other initiatives with similar goals that encourage students to have an occupational plan.
- Support professional development for educators which enables them to better meet the needs of students who are changing racially and economically.
- Support life-long learning initiatives: adult and basic education programs, and adult's participation in vocational, practical arts and retraining programs.
- Increase parental and community involvement in schools and training programs.
- Encourage the use of community resources such as the Fitchburg Art Museum, Leominster Plastics Museum, Gardner Heritage State Park, Wallace Planetarium/Civic Center, historical societies, libraries, etc.
- Encourage the implementation of the State's common core of learning so that all graduating seniors have a common base of knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- Aggressively seek local, state and federal funding to expand programs.
- Design and implement more English as a second language programs to meet the needs of local residents.
- Support dialogue between industry and technical education institutions on curriculum development and training programs that provide local individuals with the employable technical skills needed in the region and enhances the regional workforce.
- Examine educational alternatives to meet the needs of pregnant and parenting teens and students in need of remedial services.
- Develop and implement methods of measuring whether goals have been met at the individual school levels.

- Encourage collaboration among school systems and the sharing of resources.
- Advocate for redesign of curriculum to reflect a multitude of historical perspectives, rather than exclusively European viewpoints.
- Promote internships and partnerships with local colleges and universities.

C. ACTION PLAN

Below is a detailed description of the complete scope of work for the proposed EDA investment. The proposed scope of work is consistent with the Montachusett Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy goals in the regional CEDS.

Task #1 MEC, Inc. Project Planning

Provide staff support to the Montachusett Enterprise Center, Inc., creating plans for the development of affordable priced housing to low-, moderate- or middle-income families in the Montachusett Region by identifying affordable housing or “mixed-use” projects to be implemented by non-EDA planning funding within the next one year (short term), two to three years (moderate term) and more than three years (long term).

Task #2 Provide technical assistance to Communities to prepare grant applications for Community and Economic Development Funding

Provide assistance to at least three communities with the pursuit of grant resources addressing local projects improving the economic vitality of the communities. It is anticipated that Community Development Block Grant applications will be due perhaps sometime in Winter 2014 and communities have already expressed an interest in obtaining MRPC grant application assistance. Planning within the following disciplines will include, but will not be limited to, community and economic development, food systems, energy systems and siting, sustainability, municipal regionalization of services, housing related to the bolstering of the construction industry and workforce housing, and transit and transportation planning as they relate to the mobility of the workforce and the efficient movement of goods and services.

Task #3 Expand the MRBRI Committee and pursue additional Brownfields Redevelopment Funding

Continue to increase the level of public/private sector participation on the Montachusett Region Brownfield Reuse Initiative (MRBRI) Committee and work to obtain additional Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funds to further program benefits. MRPC Brownfields Site Assessment Program, which utilized EPA grant funds awarded in August 2009, was very successful. However, all funds have been expended and the grant has been closed out. MRPC pursued EPA brownfields funding in winter 2014. Grant award announcements are anticipated in late spring 2014.

Task #4 Assist with the EDIP Tax Incentives Program

Assist communities with the Economic Development (Tax) Incentive Program (EDIP) and the Northern Worcester County Economic Target Area (NWCETA) program. Provide information to all thirteen NWCETA communities.

Task #5 Maintain the Regional CEDS

The Montachusett Region will continue to maintain and implement its long-term Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy so as to create a strong and diversified economy. The working relationship with Fitchburg State University's Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI) will be deepened to: 1. Provide economic development data at least annually to community and economic development professionals; 2. Train FSU student interns on a regular basis in fields directly or indirectly related to economic development; and 3. Complete other joint efforts that would foster job retention and creation in the Montachusett Region.

Other staff support tasks included the following:

- Provide planning support to the Montachusett Enterprise Center, Inc. (MEC, Inc.), as needed concerning new employment and affordable housing opportunities in the Montachusett Region.
- Continue to offer planning and economic development technical assistance to Montachusett communities without professional staff as needed. The creative economy will also continue to be promoted throughout the region as an economic development tool.
- Maintain and improve the Montachusett Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (MRCEDS) process. Evaluate and prioritize local and regional community and economic development projects at least annually and no less than every five (5) years.
- Provide staff support to the Montachusett Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (MRCEDS) Committee, at the bi-annual meetings.
- Provide staff support to the Montachusett Economic Development District (MEDD), as needed.
- Provide staff support to the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC), as needed.
- Jointly participate in multi-disciplined projects that promote economic development such as community development, housing, environmental, and transit and transportation planning to leverage resources available to MRPC.
- The MRPC will continue to enhance MRMapper, the Montachusett Region Web Mapping Site. MRPC will add data sets, applications and tools designed with the intent of providing municipalities with important information to aid in the decision-making process. MRPC will also expand its GIS capabilities to complement those with partners (i.e. Fitchburg State University architectural design and GIS curriculums, and others) to invest in, utilize and enhance other GIS applications such as global positioning system and 3D visualization tools as well as techniques to analyze and make the highest and best use of US Census data (decennial, ACS estimates, and Economic Surveys) for the benefit

of developing job retention and creation strategies such as developing or enhancing business district reuse strategies.

- MRPC will enhance and create collaborative ventures with local, state and federal agency partners and non-profit organization in order to improve the economic health of the region.

VI. 2013 CEDS PROJECTS

In February 2013, Montachusett region communities, Chambers of Commerce, and Organizations Representing Minority and Low- and Moderate-Income Populations were contacted and sent a survey form to identify potential CEDS Projects. The original MEMO and survey are located in Appendix C. Below are an overview the responses the MRPC received. Complete Survey Forms for each project can be found in Appendix D.

A. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED PROJECTS

City of Gardner

1. **Project Name:** Downtown Urban Renewal Plan
Rear Main Corridor / Derby Drive Revitalization Project

Project Description: Design and construction of surface parking and extension of Derby Drive (public way). Reconstruction of storm drainage and landscaping as well as replacement of crosswalks throughout the central business district. The project will allow for a number of proposed end-uses, including, light manufacturing, office, and commercial developments, while decreasing vacancy rates in existing store fronts and support existing Main Street businesses. The project will accommodate market-style commercial/retail uses within the basement level in the rear of the Main Street buildings along the Rear Main Corridor while encouraging alternate modes of transportation and a pedestrian friendly marketplace.

2. **Project Name:** Mill Street Corridor Urban Renewal Area

Project Description: Implement Urban Renewal Plan for proposed industrial park development, Assessment of existing infrastructure, and land. Maximize layout and reuse of site consistent with market demands. Acquisition, assemblage, and disposition of land, hazardous materials abatement, demolition of existing derelict mill buildings, cleanup of contaminated soils.

3. **Project Name:** Summit Industrial Park Gas Line Extension

Project Description: Obtain the necessary permits, design, and construct approximately 6,000 linear feet natural gas line to Summit Industrial Park as part of the Gardner Redevelopment Authority's (GRA) efforts at provide this valuable commodity to current; and future businesses.

4. **Project Name:** Summit Industrial Park Wind Turbine Project

Project Description: Obtain the necessary permits and construct a MW-scale wind turbine in Summit Industrial Park as part of the City's ongoing efforts to become a Green Community.

Town of Harvard

1. **Project Name:** Harvard Town Center Action Plan: Parking, in the vicinity of Rt. 110 and Rt. 111 intersection, Harvard, MA

Project Description: Plan for development and design of a centralized parking infrastructure in FY14 with implementation in FY15 which could include new parking infrastructure to replace existing parking, the reuse of existing parking spaces, and reclaiming unimproved and ad-hoc parking for other uses.

Town of Lancaster

1. **Project Name:** Lancaster Water Line Extension, Lunenburg Road (Rt. 70)

Project Description: Brief Description of Local Project: The Lancaster Water System Extension project is proposed as part of the economic development of the North Lancaster area. The Town of Lancaster has long since targeted the area along Route 2 and Route 70 (Lunenburg Road) for economic development. This area was designated as an Economic Opportunity Area in 1990, and has recently been labeled an Enterprise area in the 2007 Master Plan. Since then, Lancaster has been preparing this area for new businesses by introducing a number of initiatives, including the creation of two Integrated Planning Overlay Districts, which are mixed-use overlay districts, and designation of the Route 2 and 70 areas as Priority Development Sites in the Chapter 43D Expedited Permitting Program.

As part of the economic development for this area, certain infrastructure improvements are required. Specifically, it is the desire of the Town to extend the municipal water system to the Route 70/Lunenburg Road area to enhance the potential economic development of this area.

City of Leominster

1. **Project Name:** Central Street (Route 12 South) from Union Street to the Sterling line. Replacement of infrastructure to support the Central Street business district.

Project Description: Design and reconstruction of the Central Street business corridor.

2. **Project Name:** Mechanic Street from the intersection of Laurel Street to the Connector.

Project Description: Implementation project consisting of the replacement of existing infrastructure supporting job growth in the downtown and the Mechanic Street corridor.

Town of Westminster

1. **Project Name:** Whitman River in-line sewer storage system.

Project Description: “DPW plans to eliminate the Whitman River pump station and replace with a three-barrel siphon under the Whitman River, as well as replace and increase the diameter of the existing gravity sewer to Fitchburg. At a cost of approximately 4.9 million dollars, this option would enable the Town to initiate all phases of the sewer expansion plan the outlined in the Town’s Comprehensive

Wastewater Management Plan, and provide system capacity that could accommodate up to 50 years of new development.”

VI. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance measures are quantifiable measures that are used to provide benchmarks to gauge how effectively actions being undertaken under the plan are meeting regional objectives. For the MRCEDS, performance measures will be used to assess progress the region is making toward economic objectives such as job creation and retention and public and private investments undertaken in the region. MRPC will continue to apply and refine performance measures to assist in evaluating the development and implementation of the CEDS document and to make refinements to enhance the effectiveness of the MRCEDS in the future.

A. SPECIFICATION OF MRCEDS PERFORMANCE MEASURES

To define performance measures for the MRCEDS, MRPC examined changes in the regional economy over the last decade. For example, in 1990 the average age of residents in the Montachusett Region was lower than the state average but equal to the national average. This is no longer true. In 2000 and 2010, the average age of residents in the Montachusett Region surpassed the state and national average age. Also, as of 2010, eighty percent of the Montachusett Region’s population is of working age, up from 66.1% in 2000. The number of workers increased from 2000 to 2010. In terms of business, notable losses occurred in: 1. Manufacturing; 2. Wholesale; and 3. Retail. All other job sectors experienced minor growth since 2000. Even though manufacturing jobs in the region decreased by 7,777 (-29.7%) since the year 2000, the percentage of jobs in the region in manufacturing remains higher (16.1%) than both the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (9.7%) and the Nation (10.8%).

According to the US Census and the American Community Survey, the number of jobs increased from 107,227 in the year 2000 to 115,934 jobs in the year 2010, for a total increase of 8.1% or 8,707 jobs. Job losses occurred in Manufacturing, Wholesale, and Retail while other job sectors experienced minor growth since 2000. However, it should also be noted that as of the year 2010 about 80% of the Montachusett Region’s population is of working age, up from 66.1% in 2000.

The unemployment rate for the Montachusett Region reflected the economic recession that began in the year 2007 and peaked in the Montachusett Region in the year 2010 at 9.9%, and has slowly declined since, with unemployment at 8.2% as of 2012. Of course the Montachusett Regions unemployment rate is closely tied to that of the state and the nation as a whole, both of which saw increases in unemployment during the economic recession although recently there has been some improvement in the national and state unemployment rates and this is expected to continue, albeit slowly. However, it should be noted that the Montachusett Region unemployment rate has been consistently higher than that of the state and nation and this continues to be the case.

Based on this evaluation, MRPC will track and evaluate the following MRCED performance measures over the next five years:

- 1. Total and change in the number of jobs within the Region by industry sectors.*
- 2. Total and change in unemployment within the Region compared to counties, state and nation.*
- 3. Inventory of major private sector investment project over \$5 million.*
- 4. Inventory of major Federal and State investment projects (grants and development projects).*
- 5. Total and change in number of residential housing units within the region by community.*

B. REGIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

There have been numerous accomplishments over the past five years that promote the economy of the Montachusett Region. These accomplishments are indicators of the performance of the regional economy and can be used to assess progress the region is making in attracting private and public sector investment. The MRPC is home to the Montachusett Economic Development District. The District was designated by the Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) in 2003. The MRPC has consistently received EDA planning and capacity building grant funds since 1994. The MRPC uses this resource to provide community and economic planning and development assistance to the 22 communities in the Montachusett Region since 1994. This has allowed MRPC staff to provide planning support to the Montachusett Enterprise Center, Inc. (MEC, Inc.) as needed concerning new employment and affordable housing opportunities in the Montachusett Region, continue to offer planning and economic development technical assistance to Montachusett communities without professional staff as needed, maintain and improve the Montachusett Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (MRCEDS) process, evaluate and prioritize local and regional community and economic development projects at least annually and no less than every five (5) years, provide staff support to the Montachusett Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (MRCEDS) Committee, at the bi-annual meetings, provide staff support to the Montachusett Economic Development District (MEDD), as needed, and provide staff support to the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC), as needed.

EDA Planning and Capacity Grants have also resulted in the crafting of successful economic development related grants, real brick and mortar accomplishments, and educational opportunities that include examples of the following:

Brownfields. The Montachusett CEDS document and the CEDS/MEDS Committees fully support the “promotion of economic benefits” by expanding the tax base through the conversion of brownfields for job retention and creation purposes, ensuring that the regional workforce can live affordably through affordable housing development and enhanced property values through adjacent greenspace creation. Utilizing EDA Planning Assistance funds, this CEDS goal has come to fruition through applications to the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) resulting in Brownfields site assessment and clean up grants – just a few recent brownfields accomplishments in the Region include: three affordable homes constructed and sold to families

of moderate-income; a new public library has been constructed in Gardner; more than 60 new parking spaces have been added to the inventory of parking spaces in Downtown Gardner; Pond Street has been created in Downtown Gardner opening up new areas of commercial redevelopment opportunities in the City's Central Business District; an industrial property at 184 Stone Street, Clinton was completely remediated in June 2008 (EPA's Revolving Loan Fund was utilized for clean-up) creating directly and indirectly about 30 jobs and paying about \$25,000 annually in local taxes to the Town of Clinton. Moreover, a Fitchburg City Park (Coolidge Park) was recently renovated, during which site contamination was identified. During construction activities, old landfill debris was assessed and removed. And, one last example: a former waste transfer station in Leominster was sold to a local plastics manufacturing firm after a site assessment facilitated the transaction. The firm constructed a new facility and increased employment by 10 new jobs. New local property taxes and state and federal income taxes have been generated at this site for the last three years.

Community Development Block Grants. Every year MRPC applies for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to assist communities within the economic development district with economic development related activities. Successful applications have resulted in recent projects that have included housing rehabilitation and construction of sewer/water/roads. This year, applications were due in February 2014 and MRPC assisted the Towns of Ashburnham, Ashby, Lancaster, Phillipston, and Royalston to prepare FY14 Community Development Block Grant applications ranging from regional housing rehabilitation to road reclamation projects, and a handicapped accessibility project.

Emergency Backup Power Sources Evaluation. In response to the subsequent Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) declarations that followed, funds from the U.S. Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Second Supplemental Appropriations Disaster Relief Opportunity, under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, were made available. Since the twenty-two member communities of the MRPC were severely impacted by this event, MRPC brought forth a funding application with a comprehensive planning proposal to develop a long term disaster mitigation plan, entitled Emergency Backup Power Sources for the Montachusett Region. In November 2009, the MRPC was awarded a one year financial assistance award in the amount of \$125,360 from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration's Philadelphia Office to conduct an Emergency Backup Power Sources Evaluation for all the communities within the Montachusett Region. Due to the fact that severe natural disasters have the potential to cause utility grid failures, the intention of this proposed project is to mitigate economic consequences of future disasters and enhance the health and safety of the population. This was accomplished through a comprehensive Emergency Backup Power Sources Evaluation throughout the Montachusett Region and a region wide analysis of the Electric Grid Structure. A professional engineering consulting firm (Consultant Engineers Group, CEG) was hired to conduct the analysis of the electric grid structure which consisted of an independent assessment of the capacity, structural deficiencies and inadequacies across the system. Contained in the report are recommendations to promote the economic competitiveness of the region in the face of future disasters and power outages.

Regional Energy Plan. In October 2010, the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) was awarded a one year financial assistance award in the amount of \$66,000 from the

U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration's Philadelphia Office to conduct a Regional Energy Plan for the Montachusett Region. MRPC partnered with Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) to develop the plan and the Montachusett Energy Advisory Committee, formed in January 2010, provided oversight of the project.

The goal of the Regional Energy Plan is to promote the reduction of electricity used, energy used for transportation, and non-electric energy used for heating; replacement of fossil fuels with renewable sources, and reduce global climate change emissions. This Regional Energy Plan will help the Commonwealth of Massachusetts meet its clean energy goals, as expressed in the Green Communities Act, the Global Warming Solutions Act and the policies of the Patrick Administration and result in sustainable green enhancements to energy efficiency and production within the Montachusett Region.

The scope of this project entailed the completion of seven tasks. Tasks included quarterly meetings of the Montachusett Advisory Committee to provide oversight of the project, a renewable energy regional inventory, energy model simulation forecasting that formulated by a team of WPI students along with faculty and a System Dynamics Consultant, design and construction of energy educational exhibits displayed at the 2011 American Planning Association National Conference in Boston, six community workshops, a wrap-up event, and of course a final report that includes both regional and local energy related recommendations.

Siting of Renewable Energy Facilities. The MRPC and the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) were awarded \$188,512 in grant funds in August 2012 from the federal Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) to develop a plan for the Siting of Renewable Energy Facilities for the Montachusett Region and the Northern Middlesex Region. The Montachusett Energy Advisory Committee, formed in January 2010, will provide oversight of the project within the Montachusett Region and NMCOG developed its own regional Energy Advisory Committee. This project is resulting in a beneficial partnership not only between MRPC and NMCOG but also Middlesex Community College, Mount Wachusett Community College, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and the Greater Lowell Workforce Investment Board among others.

The goal of this project is to create a Regional Renewable Energy Facility Siting Plan encompassing the MRPC and NMCOG communities and will contain recommendations for siting and promoting renewable energy facilities. Adequately siting and promoting renewable energy facilities in appropriate locations will decrease reliance on fossil fuels and petroleum products. Currently, there are insufficient siting standards for renewables; therefore developers of renewable energy often do not know what criteria they need to meet in order to develop wind, solar, geothermal, hydropower and other facilities.

The plan will include an Assessment and Analysis of Wind Energy Conversion Systems, Geothermal Energy, Photovoltaics, Hydropower, Biomass, and a Regionwide Renewable Energy Manufacturing Lands Inventory and Assessment. MRPC and NMCOG will also conduct six community workshops on the siting of renewable energy facilities. Workshop locations will include Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC), Narragansett Regional High School and Middlesex Community College.

Urban Renewal Plan. A \$50,000 EDA grant was awarded to MassDevelopment in October 2011 for a portion of the cost associated with developing the Mill Street Corridor Urban Renewal Plan (MSCURP) for the City of Gardner. MassDevelopment contributed \$35,000 and the Gardner Redevelopment Authority contributed \$15,000. The City also utilized \$15,000 in EPA RLF money to conduct a Brownfields analysis of the Corridor. The URP is a 20-year master plan for the redevelopment of the MSC, which includes 45 acres of land (18 commercial and 27 industrial acres), 30 acres owned by the City and 15 privately owned.

Educational Opportunities. The EDD/CEDS Boards meets at least 3 times per year. Meetings are conveniently held at 5pm here at centrally located MRPC offices. Meeting Notices are posted by Town and City Clerk's about 2 or 3 weeks prior to the meeting and often times press coverage is provided to let the public know about the meeting and that they are welcome/ encouraged to attend. Attendance and participation has been good – usually anywhere between 10 to 30 persons (board members and the general public) depending on the subject matter.

Meetings are designed to bring real value to Board Members and others by providing education, technical information, and opportunities to attendees that have included local and state officials, businesses, and the general public. Board Members also have the role of bringing valuable information obtained at meetings back to their respective communities/businesses/organizations. We have strived to schedule expert speakers on topics that include the Cultural Economy, Regionalization of Municipal Services (Frederick Kingsley, MA Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services), University/ Municipal Government Partnerships (Michael Radzicki, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Economics, Worcester Polytechnic Institute), Sustainable Rural Economic Development, MRPC's District Local Technical Assistance Program (DLTA), How Fitchburg State University can Support Local Municipalities (Dr. John Chetro-Szivos Director, Crocker Center for Civic Engagement), the Commonwealth's Green Communities Program, (Meg Lusardi, Deputy Director, Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources), and representatives of local municipalities to discuss efforts to support their downtowns.

Moreover, MRPC highly encourages professional development and training and staff has responded by attending training opportunities as they arise (American Planning Association National Conference, Citizen Planner Training Collaborative Annual Conference and fall training sessions, Brownfields Workshops and Annual Conferences to name a few).

A. APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS OF MOODYS BOND RATINGS

Aaa. Bonds that are rated Aaa are judged to be of the best quality. They carry the smallest degree of investment risk and are generally referred to as “gilt edge.” Interest payments are protected by a large or by an exceptionally stable margin and principal is secure. While the various protective elements are likely to change, such changes as can be visualized are most unlikely to impair the fundamentally strong position of such issues.

Aa. Bonds that are rated Aa are judged to be of high quality by all standards. Together with the Aaa group they comprise what are generally known as high-grade bonds. They are rated lower than the best bonds because margins of protection may not be as large as in Aaa securities or fluctuation of protective elements may be of greater amplitude or there may be other elements present which make the long-term risks appear somewhat larger than in Aaa securities.

A. Bonds that are rated A possess many favorable investment attributes and are to be considered as upper medium-grade obligations. Factors giving security to principal and interest are considered adequate, but elements may be present which suggest a susceptibility to impairment some time in the future.

Baa. Bonds that are rated Baa are considered as medium-grade obligations; i.e., they are neither highly protected nor poorly secured. Interest payments and principal security appear adequate for the present but certain protective elements may be lacking or may be characteristically unreliable over any great length of time. Such bonds lack outstanding investment characteristics and, in fact, have speculative characteristics as well.

Ba. Bonds that are rated Ba are judged to have speculative elements; their future cannot be considered as well assured. Often the protection of interest and principal payments may be very moderate, and thereby not well safeguarded during both good and bad times over the future. Uncertainty of position characterizes the bonds in this class.

B. Bonds that are rated B generally lack characteristics of the desirable investment. Assurance of interest and principal payments or maintenance of other terms of the contract over any long period of time may be small.

The bonds in the **Aa**, **A**, **Baa**, **Ba** and **B**, groups which Moody’s believes possesses the strongest investment attributes are designated by the symbols **Aa1**, **A1**, **Baa1**, **Ba1**, and **B1**. In 1997, Moody’s started to rate new public finance issues using expanded bond rating symbols to include modifiers 2 and 3 to the existing Numerical 1. The modifier 2 indicates that the issue is in the mid-range of its category and the modifier 3 indicates that it is in the low end.

Caa. Bonds that are rated Caa are of poor standing. Such issues may be in default or there may be present elements of danger with respect to principal or interest. **Ca** Bonds that are rated Ca represent obligations which are speculative in a high degree. Such issues are often in default or have other marked shortcomings. **C** Bonds that are rated C are the lowest rated class of bonds, and issues so rated can be regarded as having extremely poor prospects of ever attaining any real investment standing.

Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services
<http://www.dls.state.ma.us/Allfiles.htm>

**APPENDIX B: MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION-
BROWNFIELDS**

DEP Brownfields Numerical Ranking System. The Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup (BWSC), tracks reported releases of oil and hazardous materials. The reported data is provided to the DEP in a paper format (e.g., map and textual information) by potentially responsible parties (PRPs) and by licensed site professionals (LSPs), who work for the PRPs. DEP converts the reports to an electronic format for mapping and tracking purposes. These data have not been field-verified. Individual site files are available to the public through the DEP's regional offices.

DEP uses a Numerical Ranking System (NRS) to classify waste cleanup sites into Tiers. The framework divides sites into two basic tiers. If permanent cleanup is not achieved for a disposal site within a year of being reported to the Department, the site must be classified as Tier I or II. DEP then further classifies the NRS scores sites on a point system based on a variety of factors. These include the site's complexity, the type of contamination, and the potential for human or environmental exposure to the contamination. In addition, some sites are automatically classified as Tier 1 sites if they pose an imminent hazard, affect public water supplies, or miss regulatory deadlines.

- TIER 1A: A site/release receiving a total NRS score equal to or greater than 550. These sites/releases require a permit and the person undertaking response actions must do so under direct DEP supervision.
- TIER 1B: A site/release receiving an NRS score of less than 550 and equal to or greater than 450. These sites/releases also require a permit, but response actions may be performed under the supervision of a Licensed Site Professional (LSP) without prior DEP approval.
- TIER 1C: A site/release receiving a total NRS score of less than 450 and equal to or greater than 350. A site/release receiving a total NRS score of less than 350, but which meets any of the Tier 1 Inclusionary Criteria specified in 310 CMR 40.0520(2)(a), is also classified a Tier 1C. These sites/releases also require a permit, but response actions may be performed under the supervision of an LSP without prior DEP approval.
- TIER 1D: A site/release where the responsible party fails to provide a required submittal to DEP by a specified deadline. Note: formerly Default Tier 1B.
- TIER 2: DEP does not require permits and response actions may be performed under the supervision of a Licensed Site Professional without prior DEP approval. All pre-1993 transition sites that have accepted waivers are categorically Tier 2 sites.

DEP maintains direct oversight over Tier IA classified sites and Immediate Response Actions (IRAs) at any site. DEP also tracks the status of the site cleanup into five phases. This helps to determine the extent of cleanup required or remaining, and provides a guide to the city, the redevelopment agent, and the state as to the potential for redevelopment of the site to productive use.

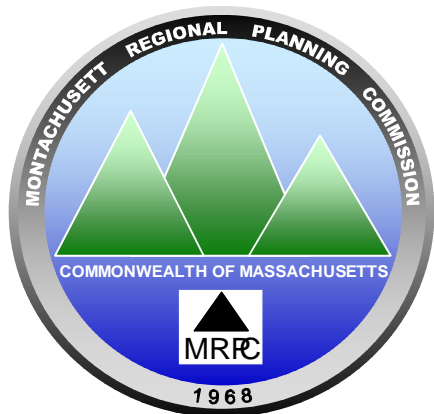
"Phases" of Site Assessment and Cleanup are Defined Below.

- Phase I: Initial Site Investigation, including Tier Classification. In this phase, samples are collected and analyzed to determine the types, amounts, and location of contaminants.
- Phase II: Comprehensive Site Assessment. During Phase II, the risks posed to public health, welfare, and the environment are determined.
- Phase III: Identification, Evaluation, and Selection of Comprehensive Remedial Action Alternatives and the Remedial Action Plan. In Phase III, cleanup options are assessed and a cleanup plan is selected.
- Phase IV: Implementation of the Selected Remedial Action Alternative and Remedy Implementation Plan. The cleanup plan is implemented in Phase IV.
- Phase V: Operation, Maintenance, and/or Monitoring. During Phase V, long-term treatment processes are implemented and monitored to track cleanup progress.

MassGIS maintains a GIS datalayer of a subset of the total reported “Chapter 21E sites” tracked by DEP BWSC. Unclassified Chapter 21E sites are not contained in this datalayer. Other Chapter 21E sites are also not contained in this datalayer, such as:

- (1) Contaminated sites that have not been reported to the DEP;
- (2) Sites for which a Response Action Outcome (RAO) has been submitted to the DEP; and,
- (3) Chapter 21E sites that have not been located.

APPENDIX C – PROJECT IDENTIFICATION SURVEY FORM



MONTACHUSETT

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

R1427 Water Street Fitchburg, Massachusetts 01420
(978) 345-7376 FAX (978) 348-2490 Email: mrpc@mrpc.org

MEMORANDUM

TO: MONTACHUSETT REGION COMMUNITIES, CHAMBERS OF
COMMERCE, AND ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING
MINORITY AND LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME
POPULATIONS

FROM Chantell Fleck, Regional Planner

RE: Local Economic Development Projects Survey

DATE: February 7, 2013

There are a variety of federal and state programs that are available to the private and public sectors that wish to plan for and implement local initiatives that will create and/or retain jobs. One such federal agency charged with assisting municipalities is the Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA). The EDA is an agency within the Department of Commerce.

The EDA requires that, in order to access any economic development planning or implementation grants from it, communities or regions must create and then maintain a “Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy” (CEDS). According to the EDA, a CEDS is:

- A process (that) will help create jobs, foster more stable and diversified economies, and improve living conditions.
- A mechanism for coordinating the efforts of individuals, organizations, local governments, and private industry concerned with economic development.
- Required to qualify for Economic Development Administration (EDA) assistance under its public works, economic adjustment, and most planning programs, and is a prerequisite for designation by EDA as an economic development district (EDD).

In 1994, the communities within the Montachusett Region worked in cooperation with the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) to create this region's first CEDS (then referred to as an Overall Economic Development Plan [OEDP]). The Montachusett Region CEDS (MRCEDS) has been updated and maintained by MRPC since its inception so that communities in the Montachusett Region will be eligible to access EDA funding as needed. The MRCEDS can be viewed online at www.mrpc.org, "Downloads" page.

In the spring, the MRPC will hold working sessions to gain input concerning the process and new projects to be included within the MRCEDS. Prior to conducting these meetings the MRPC is surveying local officials, chambers of commerce and representatives of low- and moderate-income and minority groups to maximize the input and participation across a broad range of participants to ensure that this planning document reflects the needs of people and businesses of the entire region.

A survey of projects desired by your constituents has been enclosed. We encourage you to identify local and/or regional economic development planning and implementation projects that you would like to see reach fruition. Please complete the enclosed project form for each project that you would like to have included within the 2013-2018 Montachusett Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. Submission requirements including the deadline can be found on the survey form.

Thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation and input into this valuable fact-gathering process.

**PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM
MONTACHUSETT REGION COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY**

Contact Person: _____
Contact Name, Title, Address, Phone, Fax and E-mail: _____

PROJECTS TO BE SUBMITTED MUST BE APPROVED BY THE:

- 1. CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIAL (IN COMMUNITIES).**
- 2. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OR PRESIDENT (CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE).**
- 3. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OR PRESIDENT (ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING MINORITY AND LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME POPULATIONS).**

Signature

Project Name and Location: _____

Planning or Implementation Project: (ex. plan for later implementation; reuse of an existing building or brownfield; installation of new or replacement of existing infrastructure supporting job growth or retention): _____

Brief Description of Local Project: _____

Proposed Project Schedule: Ready for Planning 2013-2014: ____
Planning or Construction Stage 2013-2015: ____
Long Term Project, Beyond 2015: ____

Anticipated Sources and Uses of Funds for Project (Include Sources of Matching Funds if Needed):

Sources: _____

Uses: _____

Estimated Number of Jobs to be Created or Retained: _____

List Types of Technical Assistance Needed, by Discipline, to Accomplish Project (ex. appraisal, legal, planning, financial, marketing or management expertise):

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

SUBMIT FORM IN HARD COPY OR ELECTRONIC FORMAT (MICROSOFT WORD or PDF) NO LATER THAN 5:00 PM, FRIDAY, March 8, 2013, TO:	ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF THIS FORM IS PREFERRED. THE DOCUMENT MAY BE DOWNLOADED AT THE MRPC "DOWNLOADS PAGE" AT www.mrpc.org.
Chantell Fleck Regional Planner Montachusett Regional Planning Commission R1427 Water Street Fitchburg, MA 01420	978-345-7376, x304 978-348-2490 (fax) cfleck@mrpc.org (e-mail)

APPENDIX D: PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

City of Gardner

Downtown Urban Renewal Plan (DURP): In an effort to further the overall revitalization of the central business district, and the redevelopment of former industrial sites in the Rear and Lower Main Street areas, the City, in cooperation with the Gardner Redevelopment Authority (GRA) developed the DURP within the downtown area of the City. The urban renewal process started in November 2005 with the formation of a DURP Steering Committee, a dedicated group of residents, business owners and municipal officials that established the framework for the DURP by defining the Urban Renewal Area (URA) and securing funding for the study. In early 2009 the City entered into a contract with BSC Group to continue public engagement in the planning process and finalize the URP. With support and approval from the Mayor's Office and Gardner City Council, the URP was submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development and received their approval in August of 2011. Since 2010 the City has received two State grants totaling \$925, 000 to assist two private sector projects within the URA, stimulating over \$11 million in private investment, creating over 105 full-time jobs and 170 part-time jobs for area residents.

Parking: A parking needs assessment completed in 2003 recommended that an additional 317 parking spaces were necessary to support current uses and known, or projected future development projects in downtown, the majority of which would be located in the immediate area. An update to this needs assessment was conducted in August of 2009 by Tighe and Bond, substantiating a need of 293 additional parking spaces to meet the demand for current and future build-out of this key downtown area to support housing, office, retail, and other development strategies as outlined in the City of Gardner URP.

Derby Drive: Derby Drive, also known as Rear Main Street, is approximately a ½ mile stretch of proposed roadway connecting one end of the former industrial center where there is currently a new library at one end and a proposed police station being planned at the other end. The City has constructed about one quarter of Derby Drive and intends to complete the roadway to encourage new light manufacturing and retail opportunities in downtown Gardner.

The City and GRA continue to identify the necessary resources to undertake these infrastructure improvements and needs. Roadway construction inclusive of sewer, water, and drainage infrastructure upgrades are needed, as well as transportation enhancement and streetscape improvements continue to be a priority.

Mill Street Corridor (MSC) Urban Renewal Plan (URP): The Corridor consists of 55 acres of commercial and industrial property, of which, the City owns 37 acres including the former S. Bent and Garbose Metals sites. In October of 2011, the City, in partnership with MassDevelopment, was awarded a \$50,000 Technical Assistance Grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration to prepare an Urban Renewal Plan (URP) for the MSC. MassDevelopment matched the grant with \$35,000 and the Gardner Redevelopment Authority (GRA) added \$15,000 for a total of \$100,000. In December of 2011 BSC Group was hired to undertake the URP. In

conjunction with the urban renewal planning effort, Tighe and Bond, Inc., was hired to conduct a Brownfield Cleanup Analysis for the Corridor, which is incorporated in the MSCURP. Initial public hearings were held in early 2012 to gather information from the general public, finalize the boundaries of the URP, and develop goals objectives. In January of 2013 the Mill Street Corridor was approved as an Urban Renewal Area by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Housing and Community Development.

The approval of the Urban Renewal Plan (URP) will allow the City of Gardner, and the Gardner Redevelopment Authority (GRA) to implement the proposed redevelopment strategies identified in the plan. The City continues to work with the Massachusetts Brownfield Support Team Initiative partners to identify resources to undertake these tasks. Most recently MassDevelopment awarded a \$500,000.00 brownfields grant to the Gardner Redevelopment Authority (GRA) to undertake cleanup planning and cleanup at the 10 acre former Garbose site. The GRA has hired Tighe & Bond, Inc, to develop the cleanup plan over the next several months. Cleanup is expected to begin in the fall of 2013, and take approximately 18 months to complete. The City and GRA continue to work together to identify a private sector partner and end-user for the site. Consistent with the URP, the City and GRA are working to develop a ground-mounted solar photovoltaic array on a portion of the former S. Bent site. Borrego Solar has been awarded a contract to develop this project, which is currently in the design and permitting phase.

1. Former S. Bent Site – To complement this process, the City was awarded \$150,000 from MassDevelopment to remove remaining building slabs on the former S. Bent site located in the MSC, and conduct further assessment work on the 27-acre site. This work was combined with the demolition project noted in #1 above, and was successfully completed at the end of 2012.
2. Former Garbose Site – As part of the cleanup planning process, the City subdivided the site into four lots from the original two. This will assist in maximizing cleanup funding from the EPA and MassDevelopment. The City has transferred ownership of the property to the GRA for cleanup and disposition purposes noted above.

Additional resources are needed in the URA to upgrade and relocated water, sewer, gas, and fiber optic infrastructure as part of the future build out. Streetscape and transportation improvements, as well as recreational spaces and opportunities are also proposed within the corridor.

43D Expedited Permitting: MGL Chapter 43D is a local option statute that offers communities a tool for targeted economic development via an expedited permitting process. The City has designated 3 Priority Development Sites: the Summit Industrial Park; the north end of the Rear Main Street Corridor, which is part of the Downtown URA; and a portion of the Mill Street Corridor URA, which includes the former S. Bent factory site. The City has used a technical assistance grant to conduct Traffic and Parking Studies for Main Street and the Rear Main Street corridor. The initial study was performed by Tighe & Bond Inc., and includes options and cost estimates for increasing the parking capacity, and extending Derby Drive to Willow Street. BSC Group

conducted a traffic analysis of the major downtown intersection and will provide suggestions for improved traffic flow in downtown based on current conditions and future buildout.

Heywood Wakefield IV Affordable Housing Project: The City is working with a private sector development team to redevelop the final portion of the former Heywood Wakefield furniture manufacturing facility into 55 affordable rental units. The City is expected to assist the developer in identifying and securing adequate parking for the land-locked building.

District Improvement Financing: On December 30, 2008 the Commonwealth's Economic Assistance Coordinating Council (EACC) provisionally approved the City's application to establish the Downtown Gardner Urban Renewal Area District under MGL 40Q. The EACC provisional approval establishes a Development District where strategic public investments are directed to encourage private investments. Additional tax revenues resulting from increases in assessed property values will be available to support repayment of bonds used to finance improvements to public infrastructure. The final Development Program and Financial Plan are subject to approval by the City Council and EACC.

Mount Wachusett Community Renewable Energy and Biotechnology Projects: Mount Wachusett Community College continues to be at the cutting edge for meeting industry needs in the north central Massachusetts region. The college also received a federal grant to train students to prepare them for careers in biotechnology and bioengineering jobs as part of the partnership with Bristol Meyer Squibb located at Devens, MA. Continuing its renewable energy track record, with the assistance of State and Federal funds, the Mount recently constructed two utility scale wind turbines on its campus. To complement these efforts, the College has recently launched a Renewable Energy curriculum.

Heritage State Park Center: The downtown Visitors Center was closed due to budget cuts by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) more than 10 years ago. The facility is located in the former Lake Street Fire Station donated by the City to the State about 25 years ago as part of the Heritage State Park Program. Mayor Hawke has approached DCR on several occasions to discuss options that would reopen the downtown Visitors Center, a critical project identified in the Urban Revitalization Plan. Most recently, the Gardner Area League of Artists (GALA) has shown interest in the property. Initial discussions are taking place, however, there is a need for approximately \$250,000 to conduct improvements and repairs on the building before it can be occupied for this use.

Summit Industrial Park: The GRA continues to investigate the feasibility of erecting and wind turbine at the end of Suffolk Lane in the Summit Industrial Park. The Mass Department of Public Health recently released a study that indicates there are no health concerns related to wind turbines. However, there is a need to be cognizant of potential impact relating to the acoustics generated by wind turbines. To this end, the GRA received a \$15,000 grant from the Massachusetts Clean Energy Technology Center (MassCEC) in September 2012 to conduct an acoustic study. A temporary meteorological tower was erected in December. A report is expected in February 2013.

The Gardner Redevelopment Authority continues to actively market available land in Summit Industrial Park. There are four parcels totaling more than 30 acres available to potential end-users. The GRA continues to work with the existing companies in the Park to address infrastructure needs. In 2012 the City and GRA worked with Comcast to provide fiber optics to each of the six companies located in the Park. The GRA will continue to work with the existing and potential new tenants in the park, along with the gas company Unitil, to provide natural gas to the businesses.

**PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM
MONTACHUSETT REGION COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY**

Contact Person: Trevor M. Beauregard

Contact Name, Title, Address, Phone, Fax and E-mail: Trevor Beauregard, Economic Development Coordinator, City Hall Annex, 115 Pleasant Street, Gardner, MA 01440, 978-630-4074, 978-632-1905, tbeauregard@gardner-ma.gov

PROJECTS TO BE SUBMITTED MUST BE APPROVED BY THE:

- 1. CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIAL (IN COMMUNITIES).**
- 2. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OR PRESIDENT (CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE).**
- 3. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OR PRESIDENT (ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING MINORITY AND LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME POPULATIONS).**

Signature

Project Name and Location: Downtown Urban Renewal Plan
Rear Main Corridor / Derby Drive Revitalization Project

Planning or Implementation Project: (ex. plan for later implementation; reuse of an existing building or brownfield; installation of new or replacement of existing infrastructure supporting job growth or retention): The project provides for the planning and installation of new infrastructure supporting job growth and retention, and the reuse of vacant brownfield properties.

Brief Description of Local Project: Design and construction of surface parking and extension of Derby Drive (public way) including reconstruction of storm drainage and landscaping as well as replacement of crosswalks throughout the central business district. The project will allow for a number of proposed end-uses, including, light manufacturing, office, and commercial developments, while decreasing vacancy rates in existing store fronts and support existing Main Street businesses. The project will accommodate market-style commercial/retail uses within the basement level in the rear of the Main Street buildings

along the Rear Main Corridor while encouraging alternate modes of transportation and a pedestrian friendly marketplace.

Proposed Project Schedule: Ready for Planning 2013-2014: Complete
Planning or Construction Stage 2013-2015: X
Long Term Project, Beyond 2015: X

Anticipated Sources and Uses of Funds for Project (Include Sources of Matching Funds if Needed):

Sources: U.S. EDA, State MassWorks, MassDevelopment, U.S. EPA, Local DIF
Uses: Parking lot; Land Acquisition; Engineering/Legal; Construction Derby Drive Extension; Crosswalk Engineering and Construction; sewer, water, and drainage installation and/or relocation

Estimated Number of Jobs to be Created or Retained: 40 Construction jobs; 15 full-time permanent jobs

List Types of Technical Assistance Needed, by Discipline, to Accomplish Project (ex. appraisal, legal, planning, financial, marketing or management expertise):
Engineering, appraisal, legal and financial

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

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Chantell Fleck Regional Planner Montachusett Regional Planning Commission 1427R Water Street Fitchburg, MA 01420	978-345-7376, x304 978-348-2490 (fax) cfleck@mrpc.org (e-mail)

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Contact Person: Trevor M. Beauregard

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Signature

Project Name and Location: Mill Street Corridor Urban Renewal Area, Gardner, MA

Planning or Implementation Project: (ex. plan for later implementation; reuse of an existing building or brownfield; installation of new or replacement of existing infrastructure supporting job growth or retention): Implement Urban Renewal Plan for proposed industrial park development, Assessment of existing infrastructure, and land. Maximize layout and reuse of site consistent with market demands. Acquisition, assemblage, and disposition of land, hazardous materials abatement, demolition of existing derelict mill buildings, cleanup of contaminated soils.

Brief Description of Local Project: Hazardous materials abatement, demolition of existing derelict mill buildings, and cleanup of contaminated soils. Design and construction upgrades to Mill and Winter Streets including sewer and water upgrades, extension of gas and fiber optics to site, streetscape improvements, and reconstruction of rail spur. The project will access up to 45 acres of land for industrial/commercial use. Some land assembly / site acquisition may be necessary.

Proposed Project Schedule: Ready for Planning 2013-2014: Complete
Planning or Construction Stage 2013-2015: X
Long Term Project, Beyond 2015: X

Anticipated Sources and Uses of Funds for Project (Include Sources of Matching Funds if Needed):

Sources: U.S. Economic Development Administration, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, State Department of Environmental Protection, MassDevelopment, Housing and Urban Development/Department of Housing and Community Development, City, Gardner Redevelopment Authority, and Private funding

Uses: Land acquisition and assemblage; site assessment and cleanup; demolition and remediation; design and construction of infrastructure improvements, recreational amenities, and marketing

Estimated Number of Jobs to be Created or Retained: 30 demolition, remediation, and construction jobs, 100 full-time permanent jobs

List Types of Technical Assistance Needed, by Discipline, to Accomplish Project (ex. appraisal, legal, planning, financial, marketing or management expertise):

The project will need appraisal, legal, design, environmental consulting, marketing, and construction assistance.

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Chantell Fleck Regional Planner Montachusett Regional Planning Commission R1427 Water Street Fitchburg, MA 01420	978-345-7376, x304 978-348-2490 (fax) cfleck@mrpc.org (e-mail)

**PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM
MONTACHUSETT REGION COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY**

Contact Person: Trevor M. Beauregard

Contact Name, Title, Address, Phone, Fax and E-mail: Trevor Beauregard, Economic Development Coordinator, City Hall Annex, 115 Pleasant Street, Gardner, MA 01440, 978-630-4074, 978-632-1905, tbeauregard@gardner-ma.gov

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Signature

Project Name and Location: Summit Industrial Park Gas Line Extension, Gardner, MA

Planning or Implementation Project: (ex. plan for later implementation; reuse of an existing building or brownfield; installation of new or replacement of existing infrastructure supporting job growth or retention): Permitting, design, and construction of a natural gas line.

Brief Description of Local Project: Obtain the necessary permits, design, and construct approximately 6,000 linear feet natural gas line to Summit Industrial Park as part of the Gardner Redevelopment Authority's (GRA) efforts at provide this valuable commodity to current ;and future businesses.

Proposed Project Schedule: Ready for Planning 2013-2014: X
Planning or Construction Stage 2013-2015: X
Long Term Project, Beyond 2015: X

Anticipated Sources and Uses of Funds for Project (Include Sources of Matching Funds if Needed):

Sources: EDA, State MassWorks, GRA, private

Uses: permitting, design, and construction

Estimated Number of Jobs to be Created or Retained: 20 manufacturing jobs

List Types of Technical Assistance Needed, by Discipline, to Accomplish Project (ex. appraisal, legal, planning, financial, marketing or management expertise):

The project will need legal, appraisal, design and construction assistance.

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**PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM
MONTACHUSETT REGION COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY**

Contact Person: Trevor M. Beauregard

Contact Name, Title, Address, Phone, Fax and E-mail: Trevor Beauregard, Economic Development Coordinator, City Hall Annex, 115 Pleasant Street, Gardner, MA 01440, 978-630-4074, 978-632-1905, tbeauregard@gardner-ma.gov

PROJECTS TO BE SUBMITTED MUST BE APPROVED BY THE:

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Signature

Project Name and Location: Summit Industrial Park Wind Turbine Project

Planning or Implementation Project: (ex. plan for later implementation; reuse of an existing building or brownfield; installation of new or replacement of existing infrastructure supporting job growth or retention): Permitting, design, and construction of a MW-scale wind turbine.

Brief Description of Local Project: Obtain the necessary permits and construct a MW-scale wind turbine in Summit Industrial Park as part of the City's ongoing efforts to become a Green Community.

Proposed Project Schedule: Ready for Planning 2013-2014: X
Planning or Construction Stage 2013-2015: X
Long Term Project, Beyond 2015:

Anticipated Sources and Uses of Funds for Project (Include Sources of Matching Funds if Needed):

Sources: EDA, State Renewable Energy Trust/Clean Energy Fund, City/GRA

Uses: Feasibility Study, permitting, and design and construction

Estimated Number of Jobs to be Created or Retained: 10 construction jobs

List Types of Technical Assistance Needed, by Discipline, to Accomplish Project (ex. appraisal, legal, planning, financial, marketing or management expertise):
The project will need legal, planning, design and construction assistance.

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**PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM
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STRATEGY**

Contact Person: _____
Contact Name, Title, Address, Phone, Fax and E-mail: _____

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- 3. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OR PRESIDENT (ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING MINORITY AND LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME POPULATIONS).**

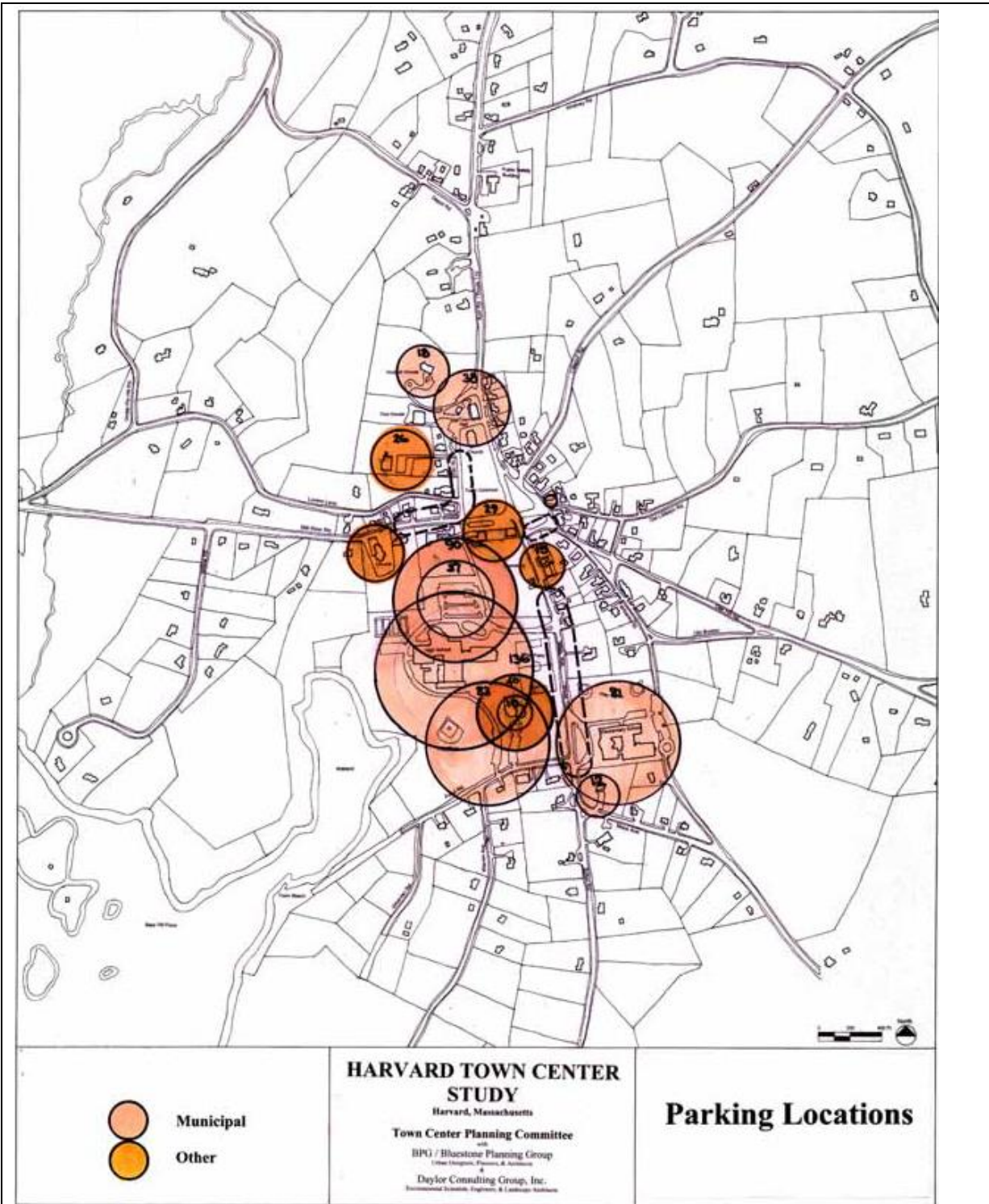
Signature

Project Name and Location: Harvard Town Center Action Plan: Parking, in the vicinity of Rt. 110 and Rt. 111 intersection, Harvard, MA

Planning or Implementation Project: (ex. plan for later implementation; reuse of an existing building or brownfield; installation of new or replacement of existing infrastructure supporting job growth or retention): Plan for development and design of a centralized parking infrastructure in FY14 with implementation in FY15 which could include new parking infrastructure to replace existing parking, the reuse of existing parking spaces, and reclaiming unimproved and ad-hoc parking for other uses.

Brief Description of Local Project: Harvard Center is the hub of many activities – municipal facilities, churches, schools, playfields, and several small businesses. The limited, unimproved, and decentralized parking inhibit the daily activities and economic growth of the Center. A central public parking facility will improve access to center businesses and support redevelopment of underutilized commercial properties.

This project would create jobs for the planning, design, and construction of a centralized parking and pedestrian infrastructure for the Harvard Center as well as supporting economic growth and new jobs at the Center's businesses and community services.



There are over a dozen large and small off-street paved and unimproved parking lots in the Center with close to 500 parking spaces, in total [See Figure]. The largest ones are municipal and schools related and are concentrated around Town Hall, along the Bromfield School Drive, and at the Town's municipal North Lot, which is used and perceived by many as the school's exclusive parking lot. The town's Library has relocated to the Old Bromfield building and a small parking lot there attempts to accommodate the Library's patronage. The total number of available parking spaces in the Center underserves the many venues located there, even under average daily use conditions. During businesses peak demand times and during large events or meetings, such as school events, Town meetings, and during Sunday morning church services, parking overflows from these limited lot spaces onto

grassy areas, driveways, and the surrounding streets. This results in loss of business, lower attendance at events, and increased safety hazards. Most concerning as a safety issue are after-school or League games held at the schools' playfields, when children and parked vehicles overflow into traffic along Massachusetts Avenue and Pond Road.

Many businesses, municipal, and social destinations in the Center are just beyond perceived comfortable walking distance from one another, particularly when there are few sidewalks or controlled crosswalks at road intersections connecting those destinations to provide safety. As a result, people make short drives between venues on a multi-errand trip instead of walking and choose to forego errands with small congested parking areas. The result is not a particularly "pedestrian friendly" center that encourages patronage of the Center's businesses and services.

The Town's municipal North Lot, now largely used by school staff during weekdays, is a potentially valuable public parking resource for shared use to support many town center functions and multi-errand trips because of its considerable size and its central location within convenient walking distance to the schools, playfields, the Congregational Church, St. Theresa's Church, and most of the Center's small businesses.

Proposed Project Schedule: Ready for Planning 2013-2014: 2014
Planning or Construction Stage 2013-2015: 2015
Long Term Project, Beyond 2015:

Anticipated Sources and Uses of Funds for Project (Include Sources of Matching Funds if Needed):

Sources: Grants, general appropriations

Uses: Consultant services for infrastructure design and planning

Estimated Number of Jobs to be Created or Retained: 2 consultant jobs; 20-50 construction jobs

List Types of Technical Assistance Needed, by Discipline, to Accomplish Project (ex. appraisal, legal, planning, financial, marketing or management expertise):

Planning, engineering, landscape architecture professionals

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Chantell Fleck Regional Planner Montachusett Regional Planning Commission R1427 Water Street Fitchburg, MA 01420	978-345-7376, x304 978-348-2490 (fax) cfleck@mrpc.org (e-mail)

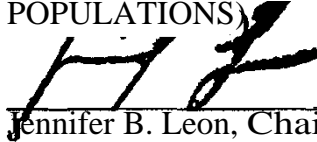
**PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM MONTACHUSETT REGION
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

Contact Person: Town of Lancaster

Contact Name, Title, Address, Phone, Fax and E-mail: Noreen Piazza, Planning Director, 695 Main Street, Suite 4, Lancaster, MA 01523, npiazza@lancasterma.net, 978-368-4007 (office), 978-368-4009 (fax)

PROJECTS TO BE SUBMITTED MUST BE APPROVED BY THE:

- 1. CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIAL (IN COMMUNITIES).**
- 2. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OR PRESIDENT (CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE).**
- 3. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OR PRESIDENT (ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING MINORITY AND LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME POPULATIONS).**



Jennifer B. Leon, Chair
Lancaster Board of Selectmen

Project Name and Location: Lancaster Water Line Extension, Lunenburg Road (Rt. 70)

Planning or Implementation Project: (ex. plan for later implementation; reuse of an existing building or brownfield; installation of new or replacement of existing infrastructure supporting job growth or retention): Extend the water line from Rt. 117 along Lunenburg Road (Rt. 70), and up to Rt. 2 in order to assist in the expansion of businesses, and to create new businesses, along this business corridor.

Brief Description of Local Project: The Lancaster Water System Extension project is proposed as part of the economic development of the North Lancaster area. The Town of Lancaster has long since targeted the area along Route 2 and Route 70 (Lunenburg Road) for economic development. This area was designated as an Economic Opportunity Area in 1990, and has recently been labeled an Enterprise area in the 2007 Master Plan. Since then, Lancaster has been preparing this area for new businesses by introducing a number of initiatives, including the creation of two Integrated Planning Overlay Districts, which are mixed-use overlay districts, and designation of the Route 2 and 70 area as Priority Development Sites in the Chapter 43D Expedited Permitting Program.

As part of the economic development for this area, certain infrastructure improvements are required. Specifically, it is the desire of the Town to extend the municipal water system to the Route 70/Lunenburg Road area to enhance the potential economic development of this area.

Proposed Project schedule: Ready for Planning 2013-2014: _
Planning or Construction Stage 2013-2015: XX
Long Term Project, Beyond 2015: __

Anticipated Sources and Uses of Funds for Project (Include Sources of Matching Funds if Needed):

Sources: State grants (Massworks), Private Contribution, Town of Lancaster

Uses: The cost for extending the water line is \$4,575,000. A private developer has committed \$125,000 towards the design and construction. The Town of Lancaster may be able to commit some funds from the Water Enterprise Fund. The balance must come from grant sources, such as Massworks.

Estimated Number of Jobs to be Created or Retained: The new development (North Lancaster Village) will create 1500 construction jobs, 2000 new FT and 1000 PT jobs, and will retain 50 FT positions. The Nationwide Auto business will create 15-20 construction jobs, 5-10 new FT, and will retain 15-20 FT positions. The Kimball Farm business will create 10 construction jobs, 12 new FT and 200 PT positions.

List Types of Technical Assistance Needed, by Discipline, to Accomplish Project (ex. appraisal, legal, planning, financial, marketing or management expertise):
Civil engineer for design of water line extension. Planning Director for grant writing.

SUBMISSION
INSTRUCTIONS

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PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM MONTACHUSETT REGION
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Contact Person: Wendy Wiiks Grant

Contact Name, Title, Address, Phone, Fax and E-mail: Wendy Wiiks, Grant
Administrator, 25 West Street, Leominster, MA 01453. 978-534-7500. 978-534-0668 ,
978-534-7500 978-534-0668

PROJECTS TO BE SUBMITTED MUST BE APPROVED BY THE:

1. CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIAL (IN COMMUNITIES).
2. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OR PRESIDENT (CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE).
3. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OR PRESIDENT (ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING MINORITY AND LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME POPULATIONS).


Signature

Project Name and Location: Central Street (Route 12 South) from Union street to the Sterling line

Planning or Implementation Project: (ex. plan for later implementation; reuse of an existing building or brownfield; installation of new or replacement of existing infrastructure supporting job growth or retention): Replacement of infrastructure to support the Central Street business district.

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM MONTACHUSETT REGION
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Contact Person: Wendy Wiiks

Contact Name, Title, Address, Phone, Fax and E-mail: Wendy Wiiks, Grant
Administrator, 25 West Street, Leominster, MA 01453 978-534-7500, 978-534-0668

PROJECTS TO BE SUBMITTED MUST BE APPROVED BY THE:

1. CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIAL (IN COMMUNITIES).
2. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OR PRESIDENT (CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE).
3. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OR PRESIDENT (ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING MINORITY AND LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME POPULATIONS).



Signature

Project Name and Location: Mechanic Street from the intersection of Laurel Street
to the Connector

Planning or Implementation Project: (ex. plan for later implementation; reuse of an existing building or brownfield; installation of new or replacement of existing infrastructure supporting job growth or retention): Implementation Project.
Replacement of existing infrastructure supporting job growth in the downtown and the
Mechanic Street corridor

Brief Description of Local Project: ___Mechanic Street is the gateway to Leominster, serving as the direct connection between Route 2 and I-190 and our downtown, and the primary artery through the Comb & Carriage District. It is estimated that 30,000 cars per day travel on and off of the connector. It is estimated that 16,200 vehicle continue onto Mechanic Street to Johnson Street with more than 10,000 traveling the length of the road to downtown. Our downtown has 90 businesses and 420 employees that count on Mechanic Street for vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The reconstruction of Mechanic Street would provide the single most important boost the downtown area has experienced since the building of Route I-190. The project would include sidewalks, drainage improvements and intersection upgrades. Designs are at 25% complete and the city has committed to pay for the remainder of the design.

Proposed Project Schedule: Ready for Planning 2013-2014:
Planning or Construction Stage 2013-2015: ___IL
Long Term Project, Beyond 2015: ___

Anticipated Sources and Uses of Funds for Project (Include Sources of Matching Funds if Needed):

Sources: City of Leominster

Uses: General fund, MassWorks application (3rd attempt)

Estimated Number of Jobs to be Created or Retained: 30 created,
490^{retained} _ _ _ _ _

List Types of Technical Assistance Needed, by Discipline, to Accomplish Project (ex. appraisal, legal, planning, financial, marketing or management expertise):

No technical assistance needed, ready for construction within 90 days.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

SUBMIT FORM IN HARD COPY OR

ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF THIS FORM

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM MONTACHUSETT
REGION COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY

Contact Person: _____Stephen Wallace, Town Planner

Contact Name, Title, Address, Phone, Fax and E-mail: Town Planner, 11 South
Street, Westminster, MA, 01473, phone: 978-874-7414, fax: 978-874-7462

PROJECTS TO BE SUBMITTED MUST BE APPROVED BY THE:

1. CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIAL (IN COMMUNITIES).
2. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OR PRESIDENT (CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE).
3. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OR PRESIDENT (ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING MINORITY AND LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME POPULATIONS).

Signature

Project Name and Location: _____Whitman River in-line sewer storage system

Planning or Implementation Project: (ex. plan for later implementation; reuse of an existing building or brownfield; installation of new or replacement of existing infrastructure supporting job growth or retention): _____
_____Implementation project. _____

Brief Description of Local Project: ____**The Issue:**

The lack of capacity at the Whitman River Pump Station is **THE** single biggest impediment to economic development in Westminster. Without a substantial upgrade of the pump station, new buildings in the Town Center cannot tie into the municipal sewer system and existing buildings cannot expand if they will generate additional wastewater. Thus, the capacity issue hinders all types of development in Town Center (commercial *and* residential). Without an upgrade of the pump station, new development cannot take place in the Town Center and the heart of Westminster will be left to stagnate.

Additionally, the sewer system cannot accommodate additional sewer flow from new or expanded industrial or commercial buildings in the Town's two largest 43D Priority Development sites. The Simplex Drive Priority Development site consists of 100 acres and enough vacant developable land remains at this location to accommodate well over one million square feet of new commercial/industrial/office floor space. The Westminster Business Park Priority Development site consists of plans for the eventual construction of 1.57 million square feet of new industrial floor space on 312 acres of land.

While the Town is committed to hosting new economic development in the Town Center and its two largest Priority Development Sites, new development in at these locations is at a standstill until the Whitman River Pump Station is upgraded.

Background:

Municipal sewage collection is a relatively new phenomenon in Westminster. In 1971 the Massachusetts Water Resources Commission determined that Round Meadow Pond was being polluted by development in Westminster's Town Center through wastewater getting into storm-drains that discharged to the pond. To address this issue, the Town hired SEA Consultants in 1975 who prepared a Report on Wastewater Collection and Disposal Facilities. This report suggested a phased sewer line installation program with the priority areas being Town Center and around Wyman Pond. However, the report concluded it was not economically feasible at the time to provide sewers to Wyman Pond. It was also noted that the Nashua River Basin Plan prohibited new discharges into the Whitman River, regardless of quality, which effectively eliminated in-town sewage treatment as an option. A subsequent study prepared by DuFresne-Henry in 1982 (Facilities Planning Report for Wastewater Collection and Treatment Facilities) concluded that transporting wastewater from the Town Center area to the Fitchburg Treatment Plant was the optimal solution.

The original sewer system in Westminster was constructed in 1982 by the Wachusett Mountain Ski Area which was expanding and in need of service. Working with the Town, the ski area connected to the Fitchburg sewer system and the Whitman River Pump Station was installed to convey wastewater over the Whitman River and into Fitchburg.

■

In 1983 the Town entered into an inter-municipal agreement (IMA) with the City of Fitchburg to send wastewater to Fitchburg for treatment and disposal. In 1984 the Town extended the interceptor sewer along Route 2A/State Road East to provide service to the Town Center. Between 1989 and 1998 several small extensions were constructed by various users including Simplex-Grinnell along Simplex Drive (one of the Town's 43D Priority Development sites). Since then, sewer lines have been expanded further along Route 2 in the Town Center.

There are two distinct service areas in Westminster: the Whitman River area is the larger of the two and covers the Town Center area, and the Route 31 area is the smaller. Wastewater from Westminster is sent to the Fitchburg East sewage treatment plant that discharges treated wastewater to the Nashua River.

Since 2003, the system has been under a sewer connection moratorium due to the Whitman River Pumping Station exceeding its capacity during peak flow events. The moratorium prevents newly created lots from connecting to sewer as well as sewer extensions. Since 2009, the Department has been investigating infiltration/inflow (VI) in the sewer system. The system's rate of VI currently stands at approximately 40% and this represents a serious problem. It is suspected a majority of the VI is from inflow sources. III in the sewer system is using up capacity at the Whitman River Pumping Station. This increases operational costs at the pumping station as well as costs to send this non-sewer flow to the City of Fitchburg for treatment. This in turn prohibits the sewer system from allowing new service connections.

Project Description:

DPW plans to eliminate the Whitman River pump station and replace with a three-barrel siphon under the Whitman River, as well as replace and increase the diameter of the existing gravity sewer to Fitchburg. At a cost of approximately 4.9 million dollars, this option would enable the Town to initiate all phases of the sewer expansion plan the outlined in the Town's Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan, and provide system capacity that could accommodate up to 50 years of new development

Project Benefits:

The project proposed will have multiple public benefits. Increasing the capacity of the Whitman River Pump Station will open the way for the full development of the Town Center, the Simplex Drive Priority Development Site and the Westminster Business Park Priority Development site. For the Town Center, there are many parcels with older homes and businesses that are ripe for turnover and redevelopment, and yet they would not be allowed to discharge more wastewater to the sewer system than they currently do today, due to the sewer moratorium. There are also two affordable housing projects in the Town Center that cannot move forward until the sewer moratorium is lifted: 72 units of senior housing to be located at 69 West Main Street (what will be the eventual site of the

Town's new Senior Center) and 36 rental units planned for Adams Street. Both of these housing projects are referenced in the Town's 2011 Planned Production Housing Strategy.

Proposed Project Schedule: Ready for Planning 2013-2014:

Planning or Construction Stage 2013-2015: X

Long Term Project, Beyond 2015:

Anticipated Sources and Uses of Funds for Project (Include Sources of Matching Funds if Needed):

Sources: Possible funding sources include the State's MassWorks infrastructure grant program, the USDA Rural Development grant/loan program and possibly some local funds to supplement the project budget.

Uses: This project is fully permitted by the State and any funds received will be used for construction.

Estimated Number of Jobs to be Created or Retained: Regarding the Town's two primary Priority Development Sites (Simplex Drive and the Westminster Business Park), these two areas could support as much as 2.5 million square feet of new industrial/office floor space if fully built out according to today's zoning standards. In terms of jobs, these two sites have the potential to create 3,125 jobs in town (half the floor space being used for industry x one job per 2,000 square feet of floor space [625 jobs], and half the floor space being used for office/ research x two jobs per 1,000 square feet of floor space [2,500 jobs]). To put this in perspective, Westminster averaged 2,402 total jobs for the year 2009. Thus, these two areas at full build-out would more than double the number of local jobs in Westminster.

List Types of Technical Assistance Needed, by Discipline, to Accomplish Project (ex. appraisal, legal, planning, financial, marketing or management expertise):

 None-construction only.

SUBMISSION
INSTRUCTIONS

SUBMIT FORM IN HARD COPY OR ELECTRONIC FORMAT (MICROSOFT WORD or PDF) NO LATER THAN 5:00PM, FRIDAY, March 8, 2013, TO:	ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF THIS FORM IS PREFERRED. THE DOCUMENT MAY BE DOWNLOADED AT THE MRPC "DOWNLOADS PAGE" AT www.mrpc.m:g .
Chantell Fleck Regional Planner Montachusett Regional Planning Commission R1427 Water Street Fitchburg, MA 01420	978-345-7376, x304 978-348-2490 (fax) dleck(2Dmmc.org (e-mail)

Massachusetts Population and Labor Force Alternative Forecasts

Description and Methodology

September 13, 2010

Prepared by Tim Reardon, MAPC

treardon@mapc.org

Population, Labor Force, and Employment

- MassDOT's methodology relies on U.S. Census Bureau projections as the basis for future population. These projections assume a continuation of migration patterns from 1975 – 2000, with average net domestic outmigration of 0.5% ([click here for data](#)).
- Migration trends have already changed since the Census Bureau prepared its projections in 2005, when Massachusetts experienced a net loss of 55,000 residents to other states. In 2008/2009, the state experienced net domestic in-migration of 3,600 people ([click here for data](#)).
- The “Steady Growth” Scenario prepared by MAPC assumes that net domestic outmigration is moderated over the coming decades, declining to 0.40% for 2010 – 2020, and 0.25% for 2020 – 2035. Both figures still represent net domestic outmigration, but at lower rates than assumed by the U.S. Census, because more residents are retained in the state and/or more new residents are attracted to move here.
- This assumed increase is consistent with state policies to encourage housing development, especially workforce housing. The MassDOT scenario assumes that housing production (which was approximately 125,000 units from 2000 – 2009) will decline to 107,000 units per decade for 2010 – 2020 and 90,000 units per decade thereafter. The Steady Growth scenario assumes that decadal housing production increases slightly to 138,000 units from 2010 – 2020 and 160,000 units per decade thereafter.
- The scenario assumes that the age distribution of residents retained or attracted by this change in outmigration is the same as the age profile of out-migrants during 1990 – 2000 (see tab “Age Distribution of outmigrants” for age profile. More than 50% of outmigrants were between the ages of 25 and 54.)

- For each forecast period, the number of residents retained or attracted in each age cohort is calculated based on the change in assumed outmigration rate; and this retained population is added to the cohort population totals for the year at the end of the planning period. This incremental population change is added to the appropriate older cohorts for subsequent forecast periods (e.g., in-migrants that were 20 – 24 during the 2010 – 2020 period are assumed to be 30 – 34 during the 2020 – 2035 period.) The model does not apply natural population change (births and deaths) to this population of in-migrants.
- The Steady Growth scenario retains DOT assumptions regarding household size (decline from 2.51 in 2000 to 2.42 in 2035) and percent of population in group quarters (steady at 4.48%)
- The MassDOT assumes a 10% decline in Labor Force Participation Rates (LFPR) for the 16 – 24 year old cohort, from 66% in 2000 to 56% in 2035. The Steady Growth scenario assumes a more moderate decline to 62% as a result of Commonwealth investments in education and workforce development. Such investments would need to retain 45,000 16 – 24 year olds in the labor force by 2035 through programs such as Pathways to Success by 21. Given that the projected contraction in the state's economy from 2020 – 2035 is a result of labor shortages, increasing LFPR for this cohort is a reasonable goal. The Steady Growth Scenario adopts the same LFPR for all other cohorts.
- The Steady Growth Scenario incorporates the Current Trends assumptions regarding ineligible Labor Force Population and Non-resident Commuting. However, it could be argued that given the labor shortages projected for the post-2020 period, non-resident commuting is not likely to decrease during that period, as projected by MassDOT.
- As a result of modestly different assumptions about migration rates and labor force participation, the Steady Growth scenario projects total statewide employment growth of 229,000 jobs statewide from 2000 – 2035. Like the DOT Current Trends scenario, the forecasts anticipate a recovery from the current recession during the period 2010 – 2020, but they do not anticipate such a steep decline in employment during the post 2020 period that might result from retirement of the baby boomers and lack of skilled labor (either native or imported.)

Household and Employment Distribution

- The Steady Growth scenario formed the basis for two alternative scenarios about the distribution of household and employment growth: the “High Dispersion” scenario and the “Low Dispersion” scenario.
- Based on the previous round of RPA projections (2000 – 2030), MAPC calculated the share of each region’s growth that would likely occur in the state’s five Community Types, based on a current trends scenario. This share was applied to the DOT Current Trends regional totals and was aggregated to a statewide share for each Community Type. These shares were used to allocate the growth under the “High Dispersion” scenario.
- For the “Low Dispersion” scenario, the distribution of growth across Community Types was adjusted consistent with the Commonwealth’s Sustainable Development Principles and other planning initiatives. More growth was focused into the Inner Core and Regional Urban Centers; and less growth in the low-density Developing Suburbs. For example, the Patrick Administration’s Gateway Cities initiative seeks to promote housing and economic development in many of the Gateway Cities, and corridor land use plans such as the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan designate large sections of many Developing Suburbs as Priority Preservation Areas. Household Growth was then allocated to each region based on its share of the growth in each Community Type.
- A per-household VMT estimate was calculated for each of the region/community type pairs based on current VMT per household by municipality (from RMV records) and the likely distribution of growth across municipalities within a region based on the most recent round of projections (2000 – 2030.)
- Due to projected employment declines in some regions and municipalities, it was not possible to develop alternative employment projections in the same manner. As a result, the Low Dispersion scenario for employment is based on slowing the rate of change in each region’s share of the state’s employment by one half. This is consistent with the Sustainable Development Principles as well as with the Patrick Administration’s efforts to focus infrastructure development and economic incentives in designated areas. Given the slow employment growth projected for the state, rapid growth rates in some regions may

contribute to employment declines in other regions, resulting in less access to opportunity, longer commutes, and strained municipal finances in those regions with very slow or negative employment change.

Appendix F



U.S. Department of Commerce
Economic Development Administration

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES CEDS SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS



Note: This document provides a synopsis of the requirements for comprehensive economic development strategies. For further information, interested parties are directed to section 302 of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. § 3162) and EDA's regulations at 13 C.F.R. part 303. The document is intended to serve as a convenient source for requirements relating to the CEDS. Nothing in this document is intended to supersede or otherwise modify EDA's statute, regulations, policies or procedures.

Introduction: A comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS) is designed to bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies. The CEDS should analyze the regional economy and serve as a guide for establishing regional goals and objectives, developing and implementing a regional plan of action, and identifying investment priorities and funding sources. A CEDS integrates a region's human and physical capital planning in the service of economic development. Integrated economic development planning provides the flexibility to adapt to global economic conditions and fully utilize the region's unique advantages to maximize economic opportunity for its residents by attracting the private investment that creates jobs for the region's residents. A CEDS must be the result of a continuing economic development planning process developed with broad-based and diverse public and private sector participation, and must set forth the goals and objectives necessary to solve the economic development problems of the region and clearly define the metrics of success. Finally, a CEDS provides a useful benchmark by which a regional economy can evaluate opportunities with other regions in the national economy.

Who should develop a CEDS? A Planning Organization seeking to formulate and implement a regional economic development program will benefit from developing a CEDS. Successful economic development efforts are based on CEDS that provide an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies. The Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as amended (PWEDA), requires a CEDS in order to apply for investment assistance under EDA's Public Works or Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs. At EDA's discretion, EDA may accept CEDS that it has funded or CEDS prepared independently of EDA investment assistance or oversight.

The following sections set out below on "Planning Organizations" and "Strategy Committees" cover the requirements for EDA-funded CEDS, while the remainder of this document pertains to technical requirements for CEDS. *It should be noted that in determining the acceptability of a CEDS prepared independently of EDA investment assistance or oversight for projects under 13 C.F.R. parts 305 or 307, EDA may in its discretion determine that the CEDS is acceptable without it fulfilling every requirement set out in 13 C.F.R. § 303.7. In doing so, EDA shall consider the circumstances surrounding the application for investment assistance, including emergencies or natural disasters, and the fulfillment of the requirements of Section 302 of PWEDA.*

A. EDA-funded CEDS

Pursuant to 13 C.F.R. § 303.6, if EDA awards Investment Assistance to a Planning Organization to develop, revise, or replace a CEDS, the Planning Organization must follow the procedures set forth in paragraphs A.1 and A.2.

1. Planning Organization: A Planning Organization (as defined in 13 C.F.R. § 303.2), typically an Economic Development District (EDD) or Indian Tribe, may be eligible for EDA planning investment assistance. The purpose of such assistance is to develop a CEDS for a specific EDA-approved region. The Planning Organization is responsible for:

- Appointing a Strategy Committee (CEDS Committee);
- Developing and submitting to EDA a CEDS that complies with 13 C.F.R. § 303.7;
- Making a new or revised CEDS available for review and comment by the public for a period of at least thirty (30) days prior to submission of the CEDS to EDA;
- Obtaining approval of the CEDS from EDA;
- After obtaining approval of the CEDS, submitting to EDA an updated CEDS performance report annually. The **performance report**, in addition to reporting progress on CEDS implementation, should also discuss community and private sector participation in the CEDS effort. Any performance report that results in a change in the technical components of the EDA-approved CEDS must be available for review and comment by the public for a period of at least thirty (30) days prior to submission of the performance report to EDA;
- Submitting a copy of the CEDS to any Regional Commission if any part of the EDA-approved EDD region is covered by that Commission;
- Submitting a new CEDS to EDA at least every five (5) years, unless EDA or the Planning Organization determines that a new CEDS is required earlier due to changed circumstances.

2. Strategy Committee: The Strategy Committee is the entity identified by the Planning Organization as responsible for developing, revising, or replacing the CEDS. The Strategy Committee **must represent the main economic interests** of the region, and **must include Private Sector Representatives** (defined in 13 C.F.R. § 300.3, with respect to any for-profit enterprise, as any senior management official or executive holding a key decision making position, or that person's designee) **as a majority of its membership**. In addition, the Planning Organization should ensure that the Strategy Committee also includes:

- Public officials;
- Community leaders;
- Representatives of workforce development boards;
- Representatives of institutions of higher education;
- Minority and labor groups; and
- Private individuals.

Strategy Committees representing Indian Tribes or States may vary.

B. Technical Requirements

Pursuant to 13 C.F.R. § 303.7, a Planning Organization must include the following information in a CEDS submitted to EDA.--

1. Background: The CEDS must contain a background of the economic development situation of the region that paints a realistic picture of the current condition of the region. This background must include a discussion of the economy, population, geography, workforce development and use, transportation access, resources, environment, and other pertinent information.

2. Analysis of Economic Development Problems and Opportunities: The CEDS must include an in-depth analysis of the economic development problems and opportunities that identifies strengths and weaknesses in the regional makeup of human and economic assets, and problems and opportunities posed by external and internal forces affecting the regional economy. This analysis must:

- Incorporate relevant material from other government-sponsored or supported plans and demonstrate consistency with applicable State and local workforce investment strategies.
- Identify past, present, and projected future economic development investments in the region.
- Identify and analyze **economic clusters** within the region.

3. CEDS Goals and Objectives -- Defining Regional Expectations: The CEDS must contain a section setting forth goals and objectives necessary to solve the economic problems, or capitalize on the resources, of the region. Any strategic project, program, or activity identified in the CEDS should work to fulfill these goals and objectives.

- Goals are broad, primary regional expectations.
- Objectives are more specific than goals, clearly measurable, and stated in realistic terms considering what can be accomplished over the five (5) year time frame of the CEDS.

4. Community and Private Sector Participation: The CEDS must include a section discussing the relationship between the community in general and the private sector in the development and implementation of the CEDS. Public and private sector partnerships are critical to the implementation of the CEDS.

5. Strategic Projects, Programs and Activities: The CEDS must contain a section which identifies regional projects, programs and activities designed to implement the Goals and Objectives of the CEDS. This section should identify and describe:

Suggested Projects-

- All suggested projects, programs and activities and the projected number of jobs to be created as a result.
- Lead organizations responsibilities for execution of the projects.

Vital Projects- A prioritization of vital projects, programs, and activities that address the region's greatest needs or that will best enhance the region's competitiveness, including sources of funding for past and potential future investments. These can be overarching "themes" for regional economic development success and is expected to include components. Funding sources should not be limited to EDA programs.

6. CEDS Plan of Action: The plan of action, as described in the CEDS, implements the goals and objectives of the CEDS in a manner that-

- Promotes economic development and opportunity;
- Fosters effective transportation access;
- Enhances and protects the environment;
- Maximizes effective development and use of the workforce consistent with any applicable State or local workforce investment strategy;
- Promotes the use of technology in economic development, including access to high-speed telecommunications;
- Balances resources through sound management of physical development; and
- Obtains and utilizes adequate funds and other resources.

The CEDS must also contain a section that discusses the methodology for cooperating and integrating the CEDS with a State's economic development priorities.

7. Performance Measures: The CEDS must contain a section that lists the performance measures used to evaluate the Planning Organization's successful development and implementation of the CEDS, including but not limited to the:

- Number of jobs created after implementation of the CEDS;
- Number and types of investments undertaken in the region;
- Number of jobs retained in the region;
- Amount of private sector investment in the region after implementation of the CEDS; and
- Changes in the economic environment of the region.

These are not meant to be the only performance measures for the CEDS. Most Planning Organizations developing a CEDS will benefit from developing additional quantitative and qualitative measures that will allow them to evaluate progress toward achieving the goals identified as important in their regions.

For more information: www.eda.gov