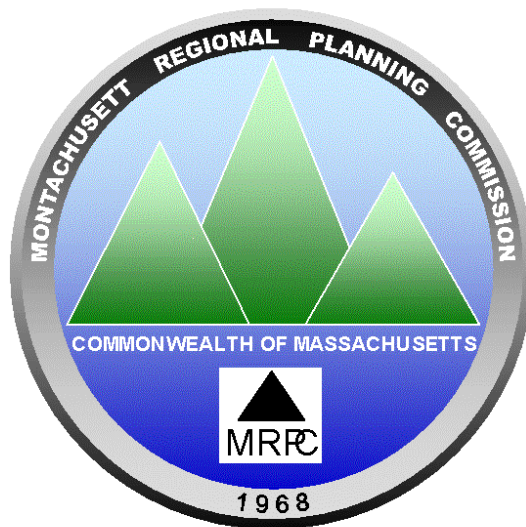


BUILDING A BETTER MONTACHUSETT

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

August, 2008



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I. METHODOLOGY: “BUILDING A BETTER MONTACHUSETT” MRCEDS ANNUAL 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:

“Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Guidelines

Introduction 1.
What Is A CEDS? 2.
Who Should Prepare A CEDS? 3.
How To Prepare A CEDS 4.
Reporting Requirements 5.
EDA’S Role 6.

June 1, 1999”

Source: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Guidelines, June 1, 1999

While the inclusion of the EDA’s CEDS Guidelines increase the size of the document, the inclusion of the guidelines has been completed in order to provide a frame of reference for the reader in what context the information has been provided to the EDA and for all readers, professionals in the fields and laypeople.

II. EDA CEDS GUIDELINES: 1. INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (**CEDS**) is the result of a local planning process designed to guide the economic growth of an area. For the purpose of these Guidelines, the terms “area”, “region” and “community” are often used interchangeably to refer to an appropriate political, economic, geographic, or environmental entity for addressing economic development. A **CEDS** process will help create jobs, foster more stable and diversified economies, and improve living conditions. It provides a mechanism for coordinating the efforts of individuals, organizations, local governments, and private industry concerned with economic development. A **CEDS** is 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).

The **CEDS** must be the result of a continuing economic development planning process, developed with broad based and diverse community participation, and contain the following:

An analysis of economic and community development problems and opportunities including incorporation of any relevant material or suggestions from other government sponsored or supported plans;

Background and history of the economic development situation of the area covered, with a discussion of the economy, including as appropriate, geography, population, labor force, resources, and the environment;

A discussion of community participation in the planning efforts;

A section setting forth goals and objectives for taking advantage of the opportunities of and solving the economic development problems of the area serviced;

A plan of action, including suggested projects to implement objectives and goals set forth in the strategy; and

Performance measures that will be used to evaluate whether and to what extent goals and objectives have been or are being met.

Public Law 105-393, the Economic Development Administration Reform Act of 1998, a comprehensive amendment of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as Amended (PWEDA), requires a strategy to qualify for assistance under most EDA programs. Since the original PWEDA was enacted in 1965, economic development planning has been a key element in achieving EDA's long-term goals. The Overall Economic Development Program (OEDP) process created a truly effective Federal/local partnership. The planning assistance program supporting the OEDP process helped develop the capacity of local organization to work in partnership with state and local public and private leaders, business, and governments to define their economic challenges and develop effective strategies to revitalize their communities. The original PWEDA required applicants to demonstrate compatibility of a project with a locally developed EDA-approved OEDP to qualify for financial assistance. EDA will continue to direct its investments based on strategies resulting from locally controlled participatory planning processes established to develop and maintain the **CEDS**.

This guide is intended to assist in efforts to develop, implement, and document a **CEDS** process. It describes the steps to follow, participants, required documents, evaluation and, for districts and other EDA supported planning organizations, the updating procedures, and reporting requirements.

Source: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Guidelines, June 1, 1999

III. EDA CEDS GUIDELINES: 2. WHAT IS A CEDS?

2. WHAT IS A CEDS?

A **CEDS** emerges from a continuous planning process developed with broad based and diverse community participation that addresses the economic problems and potential of an area. The strategy should promote sustainable economic development and opportunity, foster effective transportation systems, enhance and protect the environment, and balance resources through sound management of development. EDA may accept as a **CEDS** any locally, state, or regionally prepared plan, a plan prepared under any Federally supported program, or a previously approved OEDP, provided that it is current and its preparation and contents are consistent with these Guidelines. Future references to a **CEDS** in this document should also be considered to include a previously approved OEDP. The **CEDS** analyzes local conditions, identifies problems and opportunities, defines the vision and goals of the community, designs the strategies to accomplish these goals, coordinates activities to implement these strategies, and evaluates and updates the process. The time it takes to develop an effective process depends on an area's experience with economic development, the complexity of its problems, and the degree of coordination and cooperation among the participants. A successful **CEDS** process should lead to the formulation and implementation of a program that creates jobs, raises income levels, diversifies the economy, and improves the quality of life, while protecting the environment. The process must adopt a logical approach to long-range development while identifying and implementing short-term problem solutions to achieve early results and maintain momentum and public support.

The **CEDS** document should be readily accessible to the economic development stakeholders in the community. There should be a continuing program of communication and outreach that encourages broad-based public engagement, participation, and commitment of partners. The general public, government decision makers, and business investors should be able to use it as a guide to understanding the regional economy and to taking action to improve it. The strategy should take into account and, where appropriate, incorporate other planning efforts in the community. Its quality should be judged by its usefulness as a tool for local decision making.

Each **CEDS** is unique, reflecting the specific challenges and opportunities of its area. It should contain four main elements: *analysis, vision, action plan, and evaluation*.

- The analysis should assess the state of the regional economy, the opportunities and threats posed by external trends and forces, and the availability of partners and resources for economic development.
- The community's vision and goals, together with an appraisal of the region's competitive advantage, should set the strategic direction for the action plan.
- The action plan should establish program priorities for implementation.
- Finally, the **CEDS** should establish criteria and performance measures for evaluation of the process and for the periodic update of the document.

Source: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Guidelines, June 1, 1999

IV. EDA CEDS GUIDELINES: 3. WHO SHOULD PREPARE A CEDS?

3. WHO SHOULD PREPARE A CEDS?

Any area seeking to formulate and implement an economic development program will benefit from a CEDS. Successful economic development efforts are based on comprehensive economic development strategies. A CEDS is required by the Act, as a precondition for EDA assistance for:

(1) Public works and economic adjustment grants. To be eligible for assistance under the public works or economic adjustment programs, the applicant must accompany the application with a CEDS acceptable to EDA. A current CEDS previously approved by EDA, may be included by reference instead of submitting a copy of the document. The proposed project must be consistent with the CEDS.

(2) EDD designation. As a prerequisite for designation, a proposed EDD must prepare a CEDS that is approved by EDA, as well as meet all other requirements for designation.

(3) Planning organizations. To receive EDA ongoing planning grants, EDDs, Indian tribes, and other eligible organizations must develop and maintain a CEDS process. The initial CEDS document, subsequent annual reports and revised CEDS, must be submitted for review and approval by the appropriate EDA regional office.

A CEDS is not a prerequisite when the request is for planning assistance to develop, update or refine a strategy under the economic adjustment program (Section 203 or 209 of the Act). However, the resulting economic adjustment strategy must conform with the CEDS requirements, although it may focus on the factors that caused the immediate economic distress and how recovery can be accomplished.

Source: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Guidelines, June 1, 1999

V. EDA CEDS GUIDELINES: 4. HOW TO PREPARE A CEDS

4. HOW TO PREPARE A CEDS

The preparation and level of detail of a CEDS will depend on local circumstances, the economic development organization's staff capacity, and level of resources of the area.

The following sections describe the basic elements that should be included in the formulation of a CEDS. They provide guidance to an area for organizing and staffing for economic development, analyzing its economic problems, developing a vision and key goals to be pursued, formulating program strategies that document the process, and evaluating its accomplishments.

Updating the strategy and process is covered in the next section.

A. Organizing and Staffing for Economic Development.

The key to a good strategy is an ongoing, participatory planning process.

(1) The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee

An area should establish and maintain a Committee to oversee the CEDS process. The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee (Strategy Committee), the entity identified by the planning organization as responsible for developing, updating, or replacing a strategy, is the principal facilitator of the economic development planning and implementation process. The Committee should represent all major interests of the community to ensure that viewpoints of all components of the community are considered and to take advantage of local skills and resources in program formulation and implementation. It should include representatives of local governments, business, industry, finance, agriculture, the professions, organized labor, utilities, education, community organizations, public health agencies, the aged, disabled, the unemployed, underemployed, racial or ethnic minorities, and women. In selecting Committee members, the following elements should be considered:

- **Public Leadership.** Public leadership support is essential for the coordination necessary to develop and implement the action plan. The Committee should include appropriate representation from participating local governments.

- **Economic and Business Development Organizations.** Several organizations might be involved directly or indirectly in efforts to promote the economy. Chambers of Commerce, labor organizations, real estate companies, financial institutions, utility companies, and quasi-governmental development organizations are examples. In addition, regional, county, and local planning commissions typically are involved in activities that affect economic development. The role such organizations might play in developing and implementing a CEDS should be examined. When appropriate, they should be represented on the Committee. Particular attention should be given to business and industry representation.

- **Employment and Training Sector.** Linkage between economic development and labor force skills, community colleges, vocational-technical schools and school-to-work programs, are often crucial. Local employment and job training organizations, such as labor unions and private industry councils, should be represented.

- **Community Organizations.** The needs and concerns of housing and neighborhood associations, special interest groups, environmental protection groups, historic preservation groups, agricultural or farming associations, and citizen Committees affect economic development. These groups should be represented in the Strategy Committee.

- **Women, Minorities, Aged, and Disabled.** Traditionally, the unemployed and underemployed, women, minorities, the aged and the disabled have not been equitably represented in local decision making. Representation on the Committee assures that their needs and solutions to their problems are given appropriate consideration.

- **Other.** Health, education, social services, and other professions or special interests groups that might have an impact on the development of the region should also be involved.

(2) Working Relationships

Once the Strategy Committee is formed, the next step is to define its role and relationships with existing local, regional, and state institutions. A clear understanding of these different roles and relationships at the outset will avoid conflicts and establish positive working relationships for implementing the development process.

(3) Staff Support

The Strategy Committee will frequently consist of people with other responsibilities who do not have enough time to conduct the day-to-day functions required to assure the success of the process. These functions include collecting and analyzing information on the area's economy, identifying strategy options, and preparing detailed implementation plans. The Committee, commensurate with the resources of the economic development organization, should ensure that adequate staff resources are available to perform these functions.

(4) Committee Work Program

The work program provides the agenda for the Strategy Committee. The Committee should adopt a work program that describes each task to be performed, identifies the individual, organization, or work group responsible for completing each task, and establishes timetables. For the process to succeed, the Committee should take advantage of technical and financial assistance available from public and private sources.

These sources include Federal, state, and local governments, foundations, educational institutions, local organizations, and major corporations. EDA support under the planning, technical assistance, or economic adjustment programs may be used to help organize or carry out a **CEDS**, and for updating or refining a strategy.

B. Analysis: Where are we?

An analysis of the region should answer the question Where are we now? The Strategy Committee must have a clear understanding of the local economic situation. The planning process should begin with relevant research and analysis by the economic development organization staff. The overall analysis of the local economy should use current demographic and economic data. Data sources include, but are not limited to, the U.S. Department of Commerce's Census Bureau and Bureau of Economic Analysis; the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics; state, tribal, and local governments; and universities. Useful web links can be found at the EDA WEB Site, the address of which is www.doc.gov/eda/. EDA-funded University Centers may serve as valuable resources in providing and analyzing the necessary data. The analysis should also draw from any relevant and recent studies on hand and the knowledge of Committee members and staff. Economic analysis may be undertaken at varying levels of depth. The Committee must determine the level that is best for its resources. The analysis should be presented in the **CEDS** document in a clear and concise manner, and be easily understood by non-specialists in the general public.

(1) Background Information

The first step in analyzing the area is identification of the elements that affect the local economy. Information should be gathered in the following areas as appropriate:

- Demographic and socioeconomic data, including labor force characteristics.
- Geographic, climatic, environmental, and natural resource profile.
- Infrastructure of the area including water, sewer, communications, and electrical distribution systems, and all transportation modes.
- Major sectors of the economy and their past, present, and projected contributions to employment, income, and revenue.
- Relationship of an area's economy to that of the larger region or state, with particular regard to locational advantages or disadvantages.
- Factors that directly affect economic performance in the area such as state and local laws; financial resources; transportation systems, energy costs, business, personal, and property taxes; bonding capacity; and land use patterns.
- Other factors that indirectly affect economic performance in an area such as housing; health services; schools; educational, cultural, and recreational facilities; public safety; and environmental issues relating to flood plains, air quality, wetlands, historic preservation, hazardous waste contamination, smart growth initiatives, and brownfield reuse. Existing plans and planning processes in the region should be researched and considered. These might pertain to transportation, land use, housing, downtown revitalization, air and water quality, environmental protection, and welfare reform.

(2) Issues Covered

The analysis should address the following as appropriate:

- **The state of the regional economy.** What are the strengths and weaknesses? What are the growth sectors and clusters? What is driving the economy and where is it heading?
- **External trends and forces.** What are the opportunities and threats? How is the region positioned in the national and global economies?
- **Partners for economic development.** Who are the important actors in the region? These may include organizations, businesses, or individuals that represent important issues, including those unfamiliar to the economic development organization such as workforce development, social service delivery, and natural resources.
- **Resources for economic development.** What groups, organizations or individuals does the area have to work with? Who can provide support and funding for the development activities? From the analysis, local leaders should be able to determine if the identified problems can be addressed by local institutions. Emphasis should be given to the problems that local public and private sectors can resolve either directly or indirectly. Particular attention should be given to groups and areas suffering most from unemployment and other economic distress.

C. Vision: Where do we want to be?

The vision statement should answer these questions: Where do we want to be? In the next ten to twenty years? What are the goals? What are the areas in which the region can build competitive advantage? How can the region's strengths and opportunities be maximized, and its weaknesses and threats mitigated?

The most common method to develop a vision statement is by a series of sessions or workshops. These workshops should begin with an analysis of the region and encourage participation by partners and the general public. The staff of the economic development organization should coordinate the visioning process with broad participation of the community. A draft vision statement that includes goals should be circulated widely for review and comment. The Strategy Committee should review and approve the vision statement and goals.

(1) Vision Statement, Goals and Objectives

The vision statement, goals and objectives should respond to the analysis of the area's development potential and problems. The goals should reflect the desires of most area residents and should also be realistic and limited in number. Some should address things that can be

realized within a short period of time, while others require a longer period for implementation. The vision, goals and objectives will provide a framework for public and private decision making and serve as the basis for the formulation of the action plan.

(2) Setting Priorities

Priorities must be established to provide a basis for decisions on the use of available resources. Establishing priorities at the goal-setting stage is a critical step toward formulating the **CEDS**. The following factors should be considered:

- The effect that achieving each goal will have on the development potential or problem.
- Whether the goal is directed toward achieving short-, intermediate-, or long-term results.
- Actions related to the goals that are already underway or planned.
- The relationship of this goal to the accomplishments of other goals. The result of setting priorities should be a ranking of goals. Each goal should have a rationale that is clearly understood and publicly supported. Public meetings provide an opportunity to ensure that goals are consistent with community aspirations and existing developmental plans. The **CEDS** goals and priorities should be formally ratified by the Committee and the governments it represents.

Not every goal needs to be subjected to a full-scale assessment. Many areas lack the capacity or resources to develop or implement strategies for every goal. Consequently, the Strategy Committee may choose to limit its focus to the highest ranked goal or goals for the first year or so. Goals provide the basis for formulating the action plan and serve as milestones to evaluate the accomplishments of the **CEDS** process. Goals provide benchmarks by which the Strategy Committee, area officials, economic development stakeholders, and the community can measure performance.

D. Action Plan: How Do We Get There?

The action plan answers the question “How do we get there?” and is based primarily on long-term goals. The action plan describes activities and groups them into programs designed to achieve the desired results and to turn potential for improvement into reality. The action plan also assigns responsibility, resources, time frames, and priorities for implementation. The area's action plan is the link between the up-front analysis of the area's economy and development potentials and the resulting programs, activities, and projects that are the product of the **CEDS** process. It is a multi year strategy that includes activities and programs to take advantage of opportunities for the economic development of the area. Though its primary focus is long range, the action plan should identify some elements that can be achieved in a short or intermediate time frame.

The Strategy Committee has the central role of overseeing development and implementation of the action plan. On the basis of the analysis of the area's economy, the Committee will decide how to capitalize on the area's assets. From these decisions, the Committee then can set priorities and implementation schedules.

Assumptions about economic trends should include the outlook for the area's economy, causes of the area's economic problems, and kinds of economic activities that might generate additional employment and income. Expected changes in economic factors should take into account significant proposed actions that will impact the regional economy such as the construction of a new interstate highway, the closing of a military installation, or regulatory constraints on development.

The vision and goals of the **CEDS** should be evaluated to determine the time frame and resources required for their implementation. Criteria to guide the use of resources should include (1) how the unemployed and underemployed are to benefit, (2) what economic programs are to be used for development activities and investment, (3) the geographic locations of development activities and investment, and (4) how economic development programs and projects will be sponsored and managed. The action plan has two components: the prioritization of programs and activities and an implementation schedule.

(1) Prioritization of Programs and Activities

Identification of activities should be as broad-based as possible involving those affected by the proposed activities, and those that can ensure their success. Partnerships with a variety of organizations and the private sector in the region are a key to successful implementation. The list of programs, and the activities involved may be too long to accomplish all at once. They should be prioritized, using the following questions for **guidance**:

- *What are the activities and what are their expected benefits?*
- *Which activities address the areas or issues of greatest need and/or best enhance the region's competitive advantages?*
- *Do these activities represent the best use of limited resources?*
- *Will the activities have positive economic, environmental, and social impacts?*

(2) Implementation Schedule

The schedule identifies the most important program activities and proposes a time frame and an implementation schedule for each, in multiple phases if needed. The level of detail of the implementation schedule will be determined by the level of sophistication of the professional staff of the organization, and the resources the area has available to implement the actions. This section should describe programs and activities and identify the range of public, private and nonprofit support for each.

E. Evaluation: How Are We Doing?

Evaluation should be an element of an ongoing planning process and should answer the questions How are we doing? and What can we do better? An outline of the evaluation process should be included in the **CEDS**. Performance measures should be identified to evaluate the progress of activities in achieving the vision and goals. Preparation of an evaluation is the responsibility of the economic development organization professional staff under the **guidance** of the Strategy Committee. If resources permit, the Strategy Committee may invite an outside party, such as staff from another economic development district, a university center, or a consultant, to assist in the evaluation.

F: Documentation

The **CEDS** document should serve as a record of all the steps of the process followed and of the broad and diverse participation of the community in the development of the strategy.

Source: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Guidelines, June 1, 1999

VI. ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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 mixed-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 1990 to 2000, the population of the Montachusett Region increased by approximately 6.1%. (During this period the number of jobs in the region increased by only 1.9%).
- 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.
- There are slightly more females than males in the Montachusett Region.
- The regional population is aging consistent with the state and nation. The average age of persons in the Montachusett Region is higher than the state and national averages.
- The working age population grew proportionately with the total population growth between 1980 to 1990 and 1990 to 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.
- Within the Montachusett Region, the highest concentrations of employment by industry are in the Services & Public Administration (45.7%), Manufacturing (24.4%), Wholesale & Retail Trade (15.0%), Construction (5.9%) and Finance, Insurance & Real Estate (FIRE) (5.0%) sectors.
- Businesses with the highest number and concentration in the Montachusett Region include Services (31.3%), Retail Trade (16.3%), Construction (10.5%), Finance, Insurance and Real Estate (6.3%) and Manufacturing (6.1%).
- Notable job losses have occurred in the Manufacturing, Transportation, Communications and Utilities (TCU), Wholesale & Retail Trade and Finance, Insurance & Real Estate (FIRE) sectors.
- A significant gain in jobs occurred in the Services & Public Administration sector.
- The unemployment rate of the Montachusett region was higher than the national rate in 1990 through 1992, 1994 through 1995 and 2002 through 2007. The unemployment rate of the Montachusett region was higher than the state rate in 1990 through 1991 and all of the years from 1994 through 2007.
- Job losses in the manufacturing sector have been attributed to the shift in manufacturing out of the United States into nations expanding their manufacturing

bases. This trend has been identified in local Master Plans as early as 1967 (Templeton Master Plan).

- The average commuting time (one way) for a resident of the Montachusett Region is higher than both the State and National averages.
- Seven to nine commuters drive to work alone in their personal vehicles.
- There is an insufficient supply of housing affordable to the entire workforce, especially those of low- and moderate-incomes (ex. Working families and senior citizens).
- Statistically, the residents of the communities in the western Montachusett Region face greater socio-economic challenges (ex. in the areas of employment, education and health) than their counterparts residing in the eastern Montachusett Region.
- 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.

VII. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SITUATION OF THE MONTACHUSETT REGION AND SUPPORTING DATA

B. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY: ENVIRONMENT

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 228,005 people in the twenty-two communities where 107,227 people hold jobs 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.

C. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY: THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SITUATION

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. According to a report conducted by MRPC and Jim Campen, Cambridge, MA titled "Foreclosures Bankruptcies Subprime Lending" funded by a grant from Neighborworks America, foreclosure starts in the region totaled 264 for the year 2003. By the year 2005, foreclosure starts had increased to 582, a 122% increase over two years. Since the report was finalized in March 2007 foreclosure starts have steadily increased nationally and statewide and almost certainly in the Montachusett Region. 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 residents

access to jobs in the aforementioned employment centers and to jobs within the Montachusett Region. Significant improvements are needed to the:

- Rail system to facilitate the development of high-speed rail access.
- Road system to improve safety and capacity especially along State Route 2 and its feeder roads.

a) Demographic and socioeconomic data, including labor force characteristics

From 1990 to 2000, the population of the Montachusett Region increased by approximately 6.1%. (During this period the number of jobs in the region increased by only 1.9%). which items below would be the highest priorities.

Population Changes from 1960 to 2000

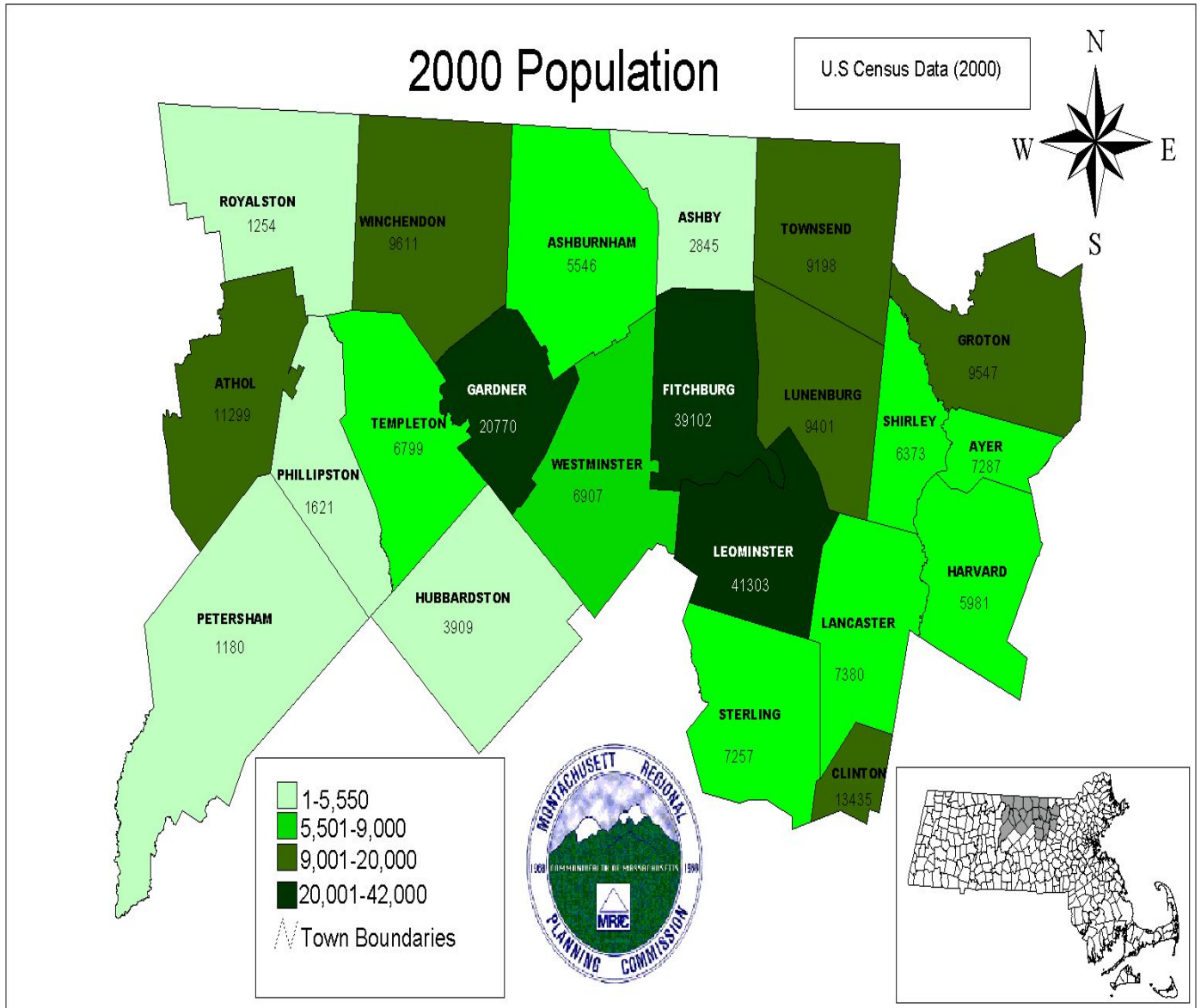
Community	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	Projected 2010	Projected 2020	80-90'% Change	90-00'% Change
Ashburnham	2,758	3,484	4,075	5,433	5,546	5,993	6,658	33.3%	2.1%
Ashby	1,883	2,274	2,311	2,717	2,845	2,864	2,925	17.6%	4.7%
Athol	11,637	11,185	10,634	11,451	11,299	11,288	11,412	7.7%	-1.3%
Ayer Total	14,927	8,325	6,993	6,871	7,287	7,328	7,257	-1.7%	6.1%
<i>Devens</i>	-	2,462	710	620	266	-	-	-	-
<i>Ayer</i>	-	5,863	6,283	6,251	7,287	-	-	-0.5%	16.6%
Clinton	12,848	13,383	12,771	13,222	13,435	13,583	13,796	3.5%	1.6%
Fitchburg	43,021	43,343	39,580	41,194	39,102	38,863	38,837	4.1%	-5.1%
Gardner	19,038	19,748	17,900	20,125	20,770	21,429	22,303	12.4%	3.2%
Groton	3,904	5,109	6,154	7,511	9,547	10,725	11,751	22.1%	27.1%
Harvard Total	2,563	12,494	12,170	12,329	5,981	6,104	6,286	1.3%	-51.5%
<i>Devens</i>	-	9,532	8,118	7,667	751	-	-	-	-
<i>Harvard</i>	-	2,962	4,052	4,662	5,981	-	-	15.1%	28.3%
Hubbardston	1,217	1,437	1,797	2,797	3,909	5,197	7,196	55.6%	39.8%
Lancaster	3,958	6,095	6,334	6,661	7,380	6,068	5,696	5.2%	10.8%
Leominster	27,929	32,939	34,508	38,145	41,303	44,072	47,325	10.5%	8.3%
Lunenburg	6,334	7,419	8,405	9,117	9,401	9,189	8,880	8.5%	3.1%
Petersham	890	1,014	1,024	1,131	1,180	1,191	1,209	10.4%	4.3%
Phillipston	695	872	953	1,485	1,621	1,901	2,304	55.8%	9.2%
Royalston	800	809	955	1,147	1,254	1,240	1,273	20.1%	9.3%
Shirley Total	5,202	4,909	5,124	6,118	6,373	7,335	7,056	19.4%	4.2%
<i>Devens</i>	-	957	718	686	0	-	-	-	-
<i>Shirley</i>	-	3,952	4,406	5,432	6,373	-	-	23.3%	17.3%
Sterling	3,193	4,247	5,440	6,481	7,257	7,656	7,967	19.1%	12.0%
Templeton	5,371	5,863	6,070	6,438	6,799	7,096	7,362	6.1%	5.6%
Townsend	3,650	4,281	7,201	8,496	9,198	9,507	10,123	18.0%	8.3%
Westminster	4,022	4,273	5,139	6,191	6,907	7,395	7,953	20.5%	11.6%
Winchendon	6,237	6,635	7,019	8,805	9,611	10,768	12,404	25.4%	9.2%
Total	182,077	200,138	202,557	223,865	228,005	236,792	247,973	10.5%	1.8%
<i>Devens *</i>	-	12,951	9,546	8,973	1,017	-	-	-	-
Total	182,077	200,138	202,557	214,892	228,005	236,792	247,973	12.6%	6.1%

Source: US Decennial Census (Devens population data has not been duplicated.)

* Growth in population is largely attributed to loss of former military base, For Devens in the early 1990s.

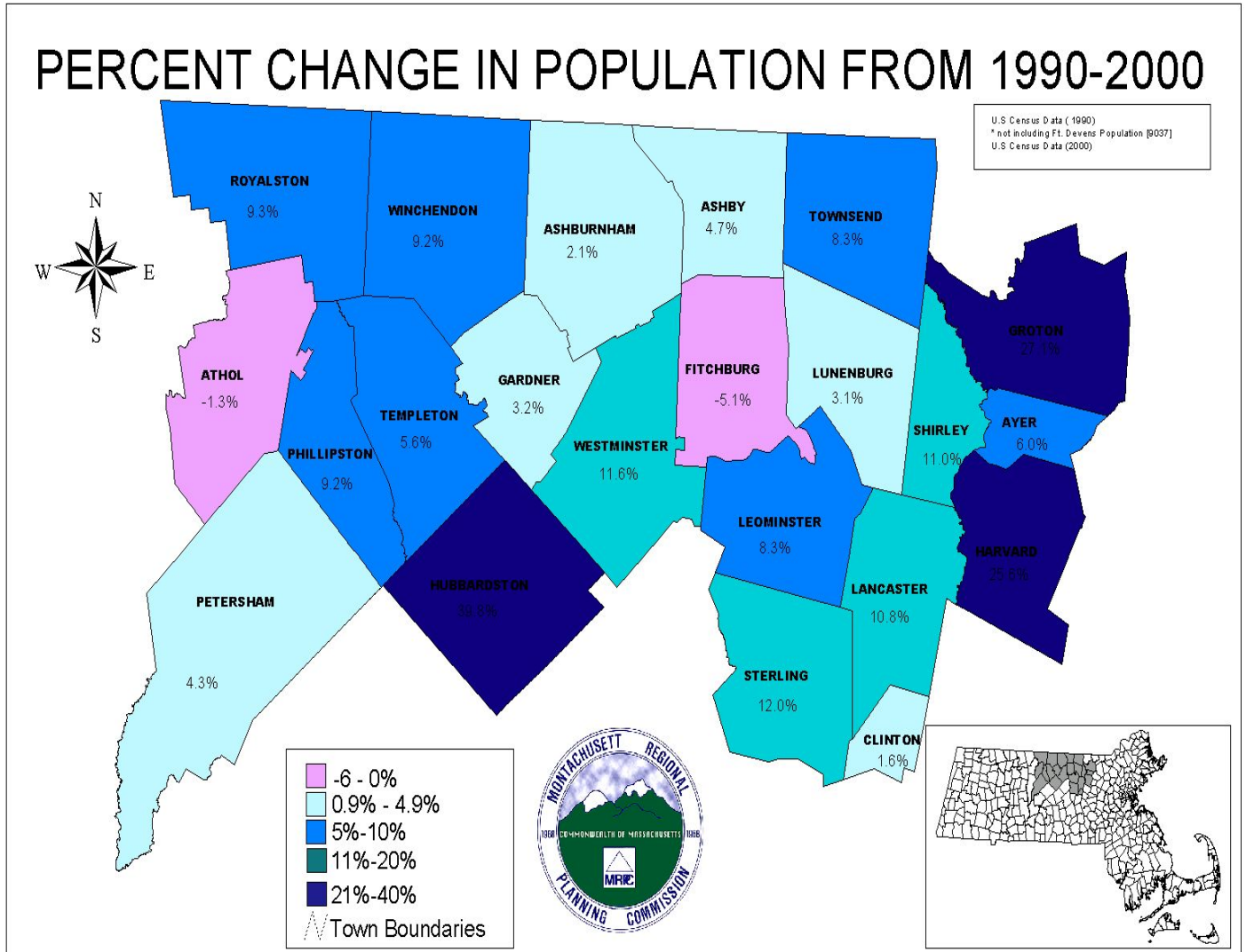
Concentration of Population in 2000

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 1990 to 2000

The most significant growth rate, by percentage, occurred in, from west to east, Hubbardston, Groton and Harvard. Athol and Fitchburg experienced population losses.



There were slightly more females than males in the Montachusett Region in 1990 and 2000.

Males & Females by Community in 1990 and 2000

Community	1990			2000					% change '90-'00	
	Population	Female	Male	Population	Female		Male		Female	Male
Ashburnham	5,433	2,665	2,768	5,546	2729	49.2%	2817	50.8%	2.4%	1.8%
Ashby	2,717	1,371	1,346	2,845	1417	49.8%	1428	50.2%	3.4%	6.1%
Athol	11,451	5,912	5,539	11,299	5830	51.6%	5469	48.4%	-1.4%	-1.3%
Ayer	6,871	3,545	3,326	7,287	3702	50.8%	3585	49.2%	4.4%	7.8%
Clinton	13,222	6,931	6,291	13,435	6963	51.8%	6472	48.2%	0.5%	2.9%
Fitchburg	41,194	21,664	19,530	39,102	20443	52.3%	18659	47.7%	-5.6%	-4.5%
Gardner	20,125	10,055	10,070	20,770	10125	48.7%	10645	51.3%	0.7%	5.7%
Groton	7,511	3,749	3,762	9,547	4816	50.4%	4731	49.6%	28.5%	25.8%
Harvard	12,329	5,191	7,138	5,981	2662	44.5%	3319	55.5%	-48.7%	-53.5%
Hubbardston	2,797	1,380	1,417	3,909	1932	49.4%	1977	50.6%	40.0%	39.5%
Lancaster	6,661	3,375	3,286	7,380	3268	44.3%	4112	55.7%	-3.2%	25.1%
Leominster	38,145	19,718	18,427	41,303	21443	51.9%	19860	48.1%	8.7%	7.8%
Lunenburg	9,117	4,596	4,521	9,401	4746	50.5%	4655	49.5%	3.3%	3.0%
Petersham	1,131	591	540	1,180	586	49.7%	594	50.3%	-0.8%	10.0%
Phillipston	1,485	722	763	1,621	806	49.7%	815	50.3%	11.6%	6.8%
Royalston	1,147	558	589	1,254	605	48.2%	649	51.8%	8.4%	10.2%
Shirley	6,118	2,886	3,232	6,373	2680	42.1%	3693	57.9%	-7.1%	14.3%
Sterling	6,481	3,243	3,238	7,257	3645	50.2%	3612	49.8%	12.4%	11.6%
Templeton	6,438	3,206	3,232	6,799	3382	49.7%	3417	50.3%	5.5%	5.7%
Townsend	8,496	4,286	4,210	9,198	4637	50.4%	4561	49.6%	8.2%	8.3%
Westminster	6,191	3,131	3,060	6,907	3462	50.1%	3445	49.9%	10.6%	12.6%
Winchendon	8,805	4,461	4,344	9,611	4845	50.4%	4766	49.6%	8.6%	9.7%
Total	223,865	113,236	110,629	228,005	114724	50.3%	113281	49.7%	1.3%	2.4%
% of Population		50.6%	49.4%		50.3%		49.7%			

Source: US Census

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. In 2000, the average age of residents in the Montachusett Region surpassed the state and national average age.

Montachusett Median Age by Community: 1980 – 2000

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

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

The working age population grew proportionately with the total population growth between 1980 to 1990 and 1990 to 2000.

Working Age Population by Community – 1980, 1990 and 2000

	1980 Census	Working Age Population 1980	1990 Census	Working Age Population 1990		2000 Census	Working Age Population 2000	
Ashburnham	4,075	2,667	5,433	3,619		5,546	4,192	
Ashby	2,311	1,490	2,717	1,770		2,845	1,926	
Athol	10,634	6,467	11,451	6,034		11,299	7,022	
Ayer	6,993	4,874	6,871	4,738		7,287	4,985	
Clinton	12,771	8,290	13,222	8,703		13,435	8,798	
Fitchburg	39,580	26,097	41,194	26,304		39,102	24,897	
Gardner	17,900	11,405	20,125	12,813		20,770	13,288	
Groton	6,154	3,982	7,511	5,204		9,547	6,179	
Harvard	3,744	8,838	12,329	8,952		5,981	4,188	
Hubbardston	1,797	1,167	2,797	1,868		3,909	2,600	
Lancaster	6,334	4,170	6,661	4,711		7,380	5,307	
Leominster	34,508	22,818	38,145	25,603		41,303	26,730	
Lunenburg	8,405	5,746	9,117	6,123		9,401	6,275	
Petersham	1,024	642	1,131	734		1,180	867	
Phillipston	953	595	1,485	1,001		1,621	1,108	
Royalston	955	591	1,147	699		1,254	835	
Shirley	4,712	3,509	6,118	4,324		6,373	4,601	
Sterling	5,440	3,559	6,481	4,412		7,257	5,262	
Templeton	6,070	3,945	6,438	4,181	6.0%	6,799	4,442	6.2%
Townsend	7,201	4,647	8,496	5,552		9,198	6,298	
Westminster	5,139	3,455	6,191	4,150		6,907	4,639	
Winchendon	7,019	4,343	8,805	5,457		9,611	6,208	
Totals	193,719	133,297	223,865	146,952		228,005	150,647	
		68.8%		65.6%			66.1%	
Pop Increases			30,146			4,140		
			15.6%			1.8%		
Workforce Increases				13,655			3,695	
				10.2%			2.5%	

Source: Census 2000, 1990, 1980 & 1970

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

In 1990 and 2000, the percentage of high school graduates in the larger urban centers was lower than average, meaning that far more people in cities lack high school degrees. In 2000, the percentage of Montachusett residents with a bachelor's degree decreased to 16.7%.

In 1990, the percentage of Montachusett residents with a bachelor's degree was 22.7%. (This trails the comparable statewide rate of 27.2%, but exceeds the nation-wide rate of 20.3%. Again, in 1990 Harvard contained the largest percentage of four-year college graduates (41.5%). Towns containing the lowest percentages of four-year college graduates included Templeton (10.5%), Athol (12.1%), Clinton (13.1%), Winchendon (13.4%), and Fitchburg (13.5%).)

The percentage of Montachusett residents age 25 and over who graduated from high school stood at 71.7% in 1980, slightly beneath the state average of 72.2% but above the national rate of 66.3%. Between 1980 and 1990, the region's graduation rate increased by 10.6%, to 82.2%. This rate significantly exceeds that of the nation (75.2%) and slightly exceeds the state level (80.0%). Also during the 1980's, all Montachusett communities, except Harvard, experienced at least a 5% increase in the number of high school graduates. Harvard began and ended the decade with the region's highest percentage of high school graduates (1980 - 95%, 1990 - 97%). The percentage of Winchendon residents with high school diplomas jumped from 58.5% in 1980 to 76.8% in 1990, representing an 18% increase over the course of the decade. The percentage of Athol residents with a high school diploma increased by 13.7% during that period.

Educational Attainment

	High School Diploma	Associate's Degree Earned	Bachelor's Degree Earned	Graduate of Professional Degree Earned
Montachusett Region	31.4%	17.1%	16.7%	10.6%
Massachusetts	27.3%	7.2%	17.1%	13.7%
Nation	28.6%	6.3%	21.0%	8.9%

Source: US Census 2000

b) Geographic, climatic, environmental and natural resource profile

(1) 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.

(2) 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.

(3) 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.

(4) 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.

c) Infrastructure of the Area

(1) 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.

(2) 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.

(3) Communications

The Internet and the World Wide Web depend upon the existence and improvements to a stable communications network. Both the private and public sectors require the availability of a durable communications network to facilitate the verbal and data exchanges. The MRPC wishes to emulate the projects known as Berkshire Connect and Monadnock Connect, helping both the telecommunications industry ensure that it continuously provides the best possible communication amenities to both the private and public sectors.

(4) 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. Some of these are Massachusetts Electric, Sterling Municipal Lighting Plant and the Templeton Municipal Lighting Plant.

Both public and private professionals are analyzing the possible installation of electrical systems fueled by renewable energy sources (ex. wind energy conversion systems [“windmills”], photovoltaic and biomass) and some communities are expressing interest in renewable energy bylaws. Just recently, MRPC provided technical assistance to the Town of Templeton through an Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) Smart Growth Grant to draft a wind energy conversion system bylaw that was passed at Town Meeting in March of 2008.

MRPC also organized a CEDS meeting in February 2008 that featured a presentation by a representative of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative’s Renewable Energy Trust Program. The Renewable Energy Trust Program seeks to maximize economic and environmental benefits by promoting clean energy technology. Discussion included an overview of renewable energy opportunities for communities, businesses, and others. More than 37 people attended the presentation including local officials, Fitchburg State College, Heywood Hospital, HealthAlliance, Trustees of Reservations, Nashua River Watershed Association, and others.

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.

(5) All transportation modes

Approximately 70% to 90% of the commuters in the Montachusett Region went to work alone in their personal vehicle.

Means of Transportation to Work by Community in 2000

	Car, truck, or van-drove alone	Car, truck, or van-carpooled	Public Transportation (including taxicab)	Walked	Other Means	Worked at home	
Ashburnham	2490	226	23	17	8	56	2820
	88.3%	8.0%	0.8%	0.6%	0.3%	2.0%	100.0%
Ashby	1327	88	6	10	0	76	1507
	88.1%	5.8%	0.4%	0.7%	0.0%	5.0%	100.0%
Athol	3811	736	57	266	59	75	5004
	76.2%	14.7%	1.1%	5.3%	1.2%	1.5%	100.0%
Ayer	3248	339	78	98	41	57	3861
	84.1%	8.8%	2.0%	2.5%	1.1%	1.5%	100.0%
Clinton	5512	736	38	221	84	135	6726
	82.0%	10.9%	0.6%	3.3%	1.2%	2.0%	100.0%
Fitchburg	13151	2280	378	681	278	361	17129
	76.8%	13.3%	2.2%	4.0%	1.6%	2.1%	100.0%
Gardner	7559	1189	173	322	41	197	9481
	79.7%	12.5%	1.8%	3.4%	0.4%	2.1%	100.0%
Groton	3997	248	100	142	34	238	4759
	84.0%	5.2%	2.1%	3.0%	0.7%	5.0%	100.0%
Harvard	2315	112	89	32	31	173	2752
	84.1%	4.1%	3.2%	1.2%	1.1%	6.3%	100.0%
Hubbardston	1775	182	0	12	13	92	2074
	85.6%	8.8%	0.0%	0.6%	0.6%	4.4%	100.0%
Lancaster	2442	219	10	224	24	168	3087
	79.1%	7.1%	0.3%	7.3%	0.8%	5.4%	100.0%
Leominster	16740	1798	343	339	189	445	19854
	84.3%	9.1%	1.7%	1.7%	1.0%	2.2%	100.0%
Lunenburg	4338	276	28	47	37	227	4953
	87.6%	5.6%	0.6%	0.9%	0.7%	4.6%	100.0%
Petersham	405	59	3	70	7	47	591
	68.5%	10.0%	0.5%	11.8%	1.2%	8.0%	100.0%
Phillipston	745	58	2	6	4	35	850
	87.6%	6.8%	0.2%	0.7%	0.5%	4.1%	100.0%
Royalston	448	68	2	13	7	39	577
	77.6%	11.8%	0.3%	2.3%	1.2%	6.8%	100.0%
Shirley	2427	220	30	3	39	72	2791
	87.0%	7.9%	1.1%	0.1%	1.4%	2.6%	100.0%
Sterling	3494	239	27	26	7	148	3941
	88.7%	6.1%	0.7%	0.7%	0.2%	3.8%	100.0%
Templeton	2723	286	0	50	34	126	3219

	84.6%	8.9%	0.0%	1.6%	1.1%	3.9%	100.0%
Townsend	4202	330	23	26	23	182	4786
	87.8%	6.9%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	3.8%	100.0%
Westminster	3059	253	24	28	6	123	3493
	87.6%	7.2%	0.7%	0.8%	0.2%	3.5%	100.0%
Winchendon	3678	507	30	51	60	103	4429
	83.0%	11.4%	0.7%	1.2%	1.4%	2.3%	100.0%

Source: US Census

d) Major Sectors of the Montachusett Economy and Location of Businesses & Number of Businesses & Classification of Businesses by SIC (Standard Industrial Classification)

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%).
- The number of manufacturing jobs declined by 4,709 (15.2%). However, it should be noted that the percentage of jobs in the region in Manufacturing remains slightly higher than both the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (12.8%) and the Nation (14.1%).

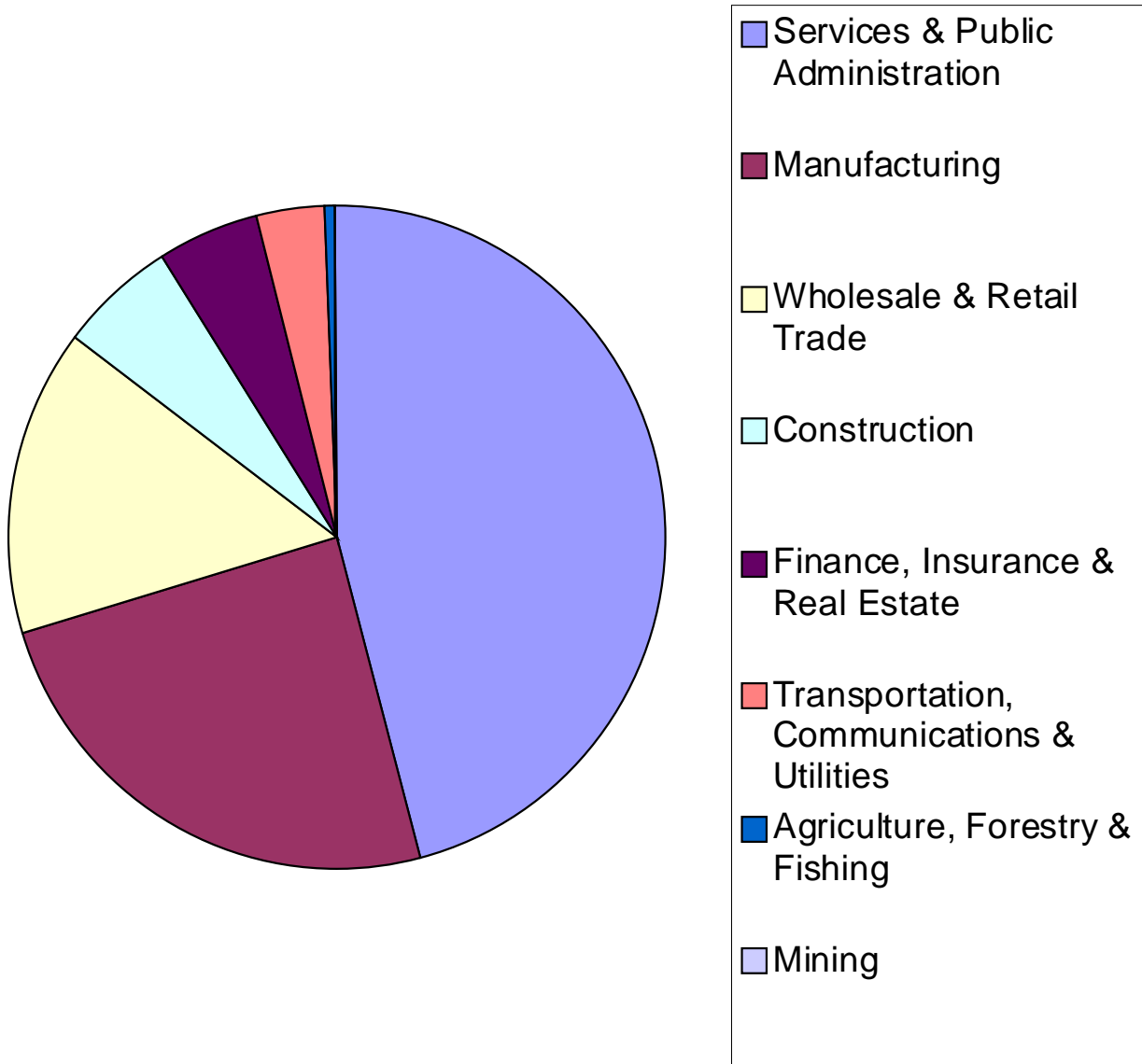
Employment by SIC – 1990 & 2000

	Number Employed 1990	Percent Employed 1990	Number Employed 2000	Percent Employed 2000	Percent Increase or Decrease 1990-2000
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	1,152	1.1%	544	0.5%	-52.8%
Mining	68	0.1%	30	0.0%	-55.9%
Construction	5,790	5.5%	6,364	5.9%	9.9%
Manufacturing	30,918	29.4%	26,209	24.4%	-15.2%
Transportation, Communications & Utilities	5,062	4.8%	3,616	3.4%	-28.6%
Wholesale & Retail Trade	21,282	20.2%	16,114	15.0%	-24.3%
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	4,780	4.5%	5,346	5.0%	11.8%
Services & Public Administration	36,160	34.4%	49,004	45.7%	35.5%
Total	105,212	100.0%	107,227	100.0%	1.9%

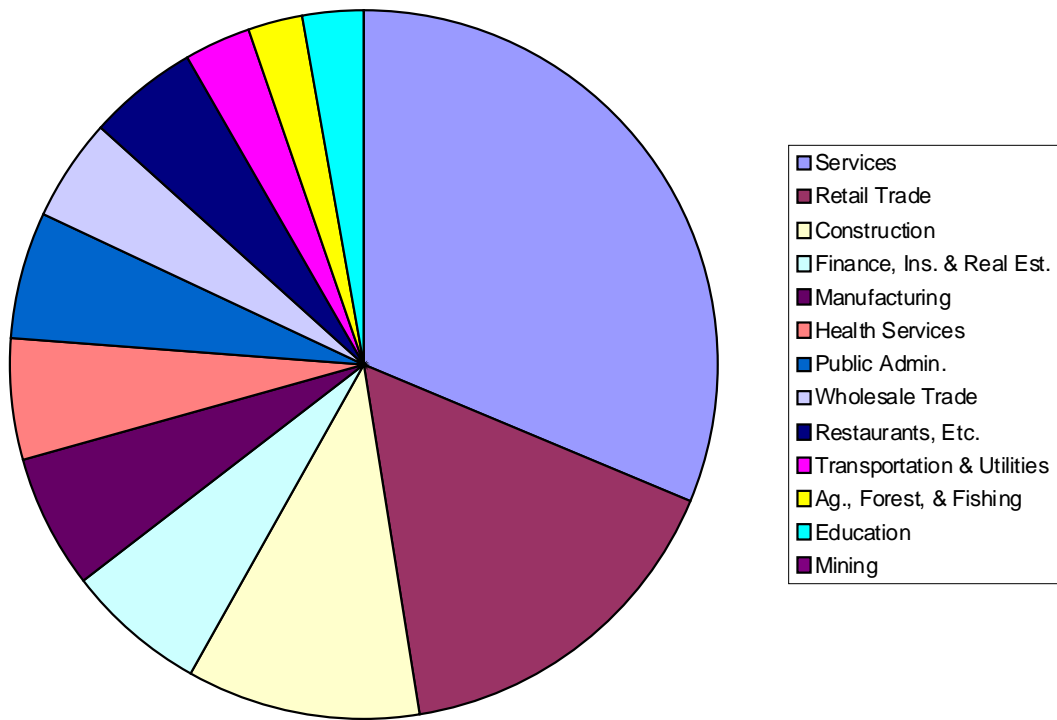
Source: Info-USA & the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

2000 EMPLOYMENT BY SIC

Percent Employed 2000



Establishments by SIC - 2000



According to the US Census, the number of workers increased from 1990 to 2000. Notable losses occurred in: 1. Manufacturing; 2. Transportation, Communications, Utilities; 3. Wholesale & Retail Trade; and, 4. Finance, Insurance & Real Estate. A significant gain occurred in Services & Public Administration.

Employment by SIC by Community – 1990 & 2000

Community	Year	Agric, Forest, Fish	Mining	Constr	Manufact	Trans, Com, Util	Whlsl & Retail Trade	Finance, Insurance, RE	Services & Public Admin	*Total	% of total
Ashburnham	1990	25	0	124	766	96	508	210	994	2,723	2.59%
	2000	8	7	216	601	46	343	113	1,506	2,840	2.65%
Ashby	1990	37	0	155	408	73	290	22	440	1,425	1.35%
	2000	23	0	123	269	79	265	30	671	1,460	1.36%
Athol	1990	64	0	252	1,609	222	906	187	1,561	4,801	4.56%
	2000	8	0	230	1,626	164	702	246	2,037	5,013	4.68%
Ayer	1990	10	0	132	905	238	675	142	1,232	3,334	3.17%
	2000	14	0	192	951	172	584	181	1,725	3,819	3.56%
Clinton	1990	70	16	515	2,345	304	1,208	290	2,147	6,895	6.55%
	2000	22	0	349	1,723	237	926	404	2,959	6,620	6.17%
Fitchburg	1990	130	6	1,029	4,821	852	3,973	766	6,371	17,948	17.06%
	2000	26	0	758	4,086	534	2,899	763	7,911	16,977	15.83%
Gardner	1990	21	0	325	2,801	422	1,758	339	3,098	8,764	8.33%
	2000	6	16	475	2,571	292	1,338	430	4,221	9,349	8.72%
Groton	1990	125	0	180	1,229	112	658	166	1,560	4,030	3.83%
	2000	8	0	225	887	174	660	242	2,424	4,620	4.31%
Harvard	1990	67	0	146	776	96	619	200	1,694	3,598	3.42%
	2000	65	0	70	498	20	313	184	1,416	2,566	2.39%
Hubbardston	1990	61	5	138	396	62	208	57	495	1,422	1.35%
	2000	21	0	182	472	76	224	117	932	2,024	1.89%
Lancaster	1990	77	0	172	754	115	608	101	1,566	3,393	3.22%
	2000	5	0	250	674	91	382	153	1,511	3,066	2.86%
Leominster	1990	115	15	948	6,065	863	4,476	1,061	5,990	19,533	18.57%
	2000	91	0	1,045	5,148	619	2,993	999	8,685	19,580	18.26%
Lunenburg	1990	83	21	314	1,245	352	1,089	189	1,567	4,860	4.62%
	2000	21	7	375	817	254	686	315	2,184	4,659	4.34%
Petersham	1990	15	0	57	81	41	103	22	247	566	0.54%
	2000	17	0	33	73	9	56	21	374	583	0.54%
Phillipston	1990	21	0	54	181	58	140	33	230	717	0.68%
	2000	22	0	67	200	15	150	21	357	832	0.78%
Royalston	1990	9	0	30	170	22	100	15	167	513	0.49%
	2000	20	0	52	142	21	64	18	259	576	0.54%
Shirley	1990	0	5	167	976	140	424	169	899	2,780	2.64%
	2000	4	0	205	609	131	351	143	1,260	2,703	2.52%
Sterling	1990	34	0	225	880	204	648	281	1,024	3,296	3.13%
	2000	29	0	271	838	124	516	211	1,872	3,861	3.60%
Templeton	1990	54	0	187	874	216	608	96	1,032	3,067	2.92%
	2000	21	0	203	702	126	850	171	1,437	3,510	3.27%
Townsend	1990	57	0	209	1,517	172	898	198	1,322	4,373	4.16%
	2000	23	0	456	1,108	110	719	238	2,051	4,705	4.39%
Westminster	1990	45	0	190	824	237	726	91	1,047	3,160	3.00%
	2000	70	0	193	872	206	494	200	1,452	3,487	3.25%
Winchendon	1990	32	0	241	1,295	165	659	145	1,477	4,014	3.82%
	2000	20	0	394	1,342	116	599	146	1,760	4,377	4.08%
Total	1990	1,152	68	5,790	30,918	5,062	21,282	4,780	36,160	105,212	
	2000	544	30	6,364	26,209	3,616	16,114	5,346	49,004	107,227	

Services include: business & repair, personal, entertainment & recreation, health, educational and other professional

Source: U. S. Census, 1990 and 2000

The unemployment rate of the Montachusett region was higher than the national rate in 1990 through 1992, 1994 through 1995 and 2002 through 2007. 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 2007.

Unemployment Rate: US, Massachusetts and the Montachusett Region – 1990 – 2007 - 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%

Source: Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training and US Bureau of Economic Analysis

The average commuting time (one way) for a resident of the Montachusett Region (29.1 minutes) was higher than both the State (27.0 minutes) and National (25.5 minutes) averages.

Mean Travel Time To Work

	Mean travel time to work (minutes)
Ashburnham	31.4
Ashby	31.4
Athol	24.6
Ayer	28.3
Clinton	24.0
Fitchburg	23.2
Gardner	24.1
Groton	33.5
Harvard	32.2
Hubbardston	35.5
Lancaster	26.2
Leominster	25.5
Lunenburg	26.0
Petersham	29.6
Phillipston	29.4
Royalston	35.1
Shirley	30.9
Sterling	28.8
Templeton	25.2
Townsend	36.4
Westminster	28.7
Winchendon	29.5
Montachusett Region	29.1
Massachusetts	27.0
U.S.	25.5

Source: U.S. Census 2000

Income Characteristics of Median Family Income (MFI), Median Household Income (MHI) and Per Capita Income (PCI)

Median Family Income. Region-wide the median family income rose 60.1% from \$38,901 in 1990 to \$62,292 in 2000. In 2000, Communities like Harvard, Groton and Sterling have MFIs higher than the regional average while the MFIs in Athol, Fitchburg and Gardner have the lowest MFIs in the Region.

Median Family Income			
	Median Family Income, 1990	Median Family Income 2000	% Change
Region Average	\$38,901	\$62,292	60.1%
Massachusetts	\$44,367	\$61,664	39.0%
US	\$35,225	\$50,046	42.1%

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census 1990 and 2000

In 1990, median family income in the Montachusett Region averaged \$38,901, below the statewide median family income of \$44,367. The region's 1990 median family income represents a 148% increase from the 1980 regional level of \$15,700. The comparable statewide median for 1980 was \$21,329.

Comparison of the state and regional median family incomes over the 1980s shows Montachusett making significant gains, ending the decade nearly even with the state median. The overall increase in income, however, masks significant variations within towns and cities in the region. Within the region, the contrast between urban areas and wealthier, small towns ranged from a high of \$60,000 in Groton, to a low of \$32,939 in Ayer. Fitchburg (\$33,357) and Athol (\$33,263) also showed relatively low median family income levels, although other urban centers such as Leominster (\$41,927) and Clinton (\$40,139) compared favorably with the suburban towns.

Median Household Income. The regional average MHI rose 25.4% to \$54,629 in 2000 surpassing the Massachusetts (\$50,502) and National (\$41,994) averages.

Median Household Income			
	Median Household Income 1990	Median Household Income 2000	% Change
Region Average	\$43,576	\$54,629	25.4%
Massachusetts	\$44,367	\$50,502	13.8%
US	\$21,329	\$41,994	96.9%

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

Per Capita Income. In 2000, region-wide the per capita income (CPI) rose 31.5% from \$15,526 in 1990 to \$20,417 in 2000. In 2000, communities like Harvard, Groton and Sterling have CPIs higher than the regional average while the CPIs in Athol, Fitchburg and Royalston have the lowest CPIs in the Region.

In 1990, average per capita income for the Montachusett Region was \$15,526. This ranks the region above the national per capita income of \$13,546, but below the statewide average of \$17,070. Within the region, per capita income in 1990 ranged from a high of \$22,832 in Groton to a low of \$12,140 in Fitchburg, the most populous community in the region. Again, Leominster (\$15,960) and Clinton (\$15,328) showed higher per capita income levels than other urban areas, indicating healthier local economies.

Per Capita Income

Community	Per Capita Income, 1990	Per Capita Income, 2000	% Change
Region Average	\$15,526	\$20,417	31.5%
Massachusetts	\$17,224	\$25,952	73.9%
US	\$14,420	\$21,587	49.7%

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census 1990 and 2000

Consumer Price Index

In the Boston-Brockton-Nashua-Worcester-Lawrence area, the “cost of living” (also known as the Consumer Price Index) rose 32.2% from 1990 to 2000.

Consumer Price Index by Year

YEAR	ANNUAL CPI % INCREASE
1990	5.8%
1991	4.4%
1992	2.5%
1993	2.9%
1994	1.3%
1995	2.4%
1996	3.0%
1997	2.8%
1998	2.3%
1999	2.5%
2000	4.3%

TEN-YEAR CPI % INCREASE: 32.2%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

The Median Family Income of the Montachusett Region, State and Nation grew at rates higher than the Consumer Price Index. The Montachusett Region’s Median Family Income also grew at a greater rate than the Consumer Price Index.

Increase in Median Family Income vs. Consumer Price Index: 1990 - 2000

	% Increase: 1990- 2000
Region Average	60.1%
Massachusetts	39.0%
US	42.1%
Consumer Price Index	32.2%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

The Median Household income of the Nation grew at a rate approximately three times greater than the Consumer Price Index. The rates of growth of the Median Household Income of the Montachusett region and the State grew slower than the Consumer Price Index.

Increase in Median Household Income vs. Consumer Price Index: 1990 - 2000

	% Increase: 1990- 2000
Region Average	25.4%
Massachusetts	13.8%
US	96.9%
Consumer Price Index	32.2%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

The State and Nation's Per Capita Income outpaced the Consumer Price Index. The growth rate of the Montachusett Region's Per Capita Income grew only slightly less than the Consumer Price Index.

Increase in Per Capita Income vs. Consumer Price Index: 1990 - 2000

	% Increase: 1990- 2000
Region Average	31.5%
Massachusetts	73.9%
US	49.7%
Consumer Price Index	32.2%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

e) Relationship of the Montachusett Region's Economy to the County, State and Nation

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 may 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.

f) Factors Affecting the Economic Performance of the Montachusett Region

This section will explore the factors that directly affect economic performance in the Montachusett Region such as: state and local laws; financial resources; transportation systems, business, personal, and property taxes; bonding capacity; land use patterns; and, education systems and workforce development.

(1) State and Local Laws

(a) State Laws

While some federal, state and local laws are consider “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.

By adopting Ch 43D, a community automatically becomes eligible for a \$100,000 grant that could be used for economic development related purposes including permitting software, training, and engineering services for the Priority Development Sites. Other 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.

(b) Local Laws

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.

(2) *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) *Transportation Systems, business, personal, and property taxes*

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 three active municipal airports in Fitchburg, Gardner, and Sterling. There are no rivers used for the navigation of goods. (Rivers and streams are, however, used by canoeists, kayakers and anglers for outdoor activities.)

Business, Personal and Property Taxes. As of FY 2008, 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.

FY 2008 Residential and Business Property Tax Rates

MUNICIPALITY	RESIDENTIAL TAX RATE (PERSONAL AND PROPERTY)	COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL TAX RATE (PERSONAL AND PROPERTY)
Ashburnham	13.00	13.00
Ashby	11.53	11.53
Athol	10.43	10.43
Ayer	9.84	23.85
Clinton	11.34	20.94
Fitchburg	11.75	17.29
Gardner	12.11	12.11
Groton	13.87	13.87
Harvard	12.68	12.68
Hubbardston	9.43	9.43
Lancaster	13.64	13.64
Leominster	11.25	11.25
Lunenburg	12.23	12.23
Petersham	11.45	11.45
Phillipston	11.35	11.35
Royalston	8.67	8.67
Shirley	10.15	10.15
Sterling	12.63	12.63
Templeton	9.20	9.20
Townsend	13.44	13.44
Westminster	11.94	11.94
Winchendon	11.49	11.49

Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services

(4) *Bonding capacity*

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

MOODYS BOND RATING – August 2007

MUNICIPALITY	BOND RATE (MOODYS)
Ashburnham	Not Available from www.mass.gov (DLS)
Ashby	Not Available from www.mass.gov (DLS)
Athol	A3
Ayer	A2
Clinton	A3
Fitchburg	Baa1
Gardner	Baa1
Groton	A2
Harvard	Not Available from www.mass.gov (DLS)
Hubbardston	Not Available from www.mass.gov (DLS)
Lancaster	A3
Leominster	A1
Lunenburg	A2
Petersham	Not Available from www.mass.gov (DLS)
Phillipston	Not Available from www.mass.gov (DLS)
Royalston	Not Available from www.mass.gov (DLS)
Shirley	Not Available from www.mass.gov (DLS)
Sterling	A1
Templeton	A3
Townsend	A2
Westminster	Not Available from www.mass.gov (DLS)
Winchendon	Baa1

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

Definitions of Moodys Bond Ratings can be found in the appendix.

(5) land use patterns

Multiple land uses exist 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.

(6) 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 College 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.

g) Other factors that indirectly affecting economic performance in the Montachusett Region

(1) Housing

In 2000, Ashby, Harvard and Hubbardston have the highest percentage of owner-occupied dwelling units. Clinton, Fitchburg and Gardner have the lowest percentage of owner-occupied dwelling units.

Occupied Units 2000

Community	Units Occupied	Owner Occupied	% Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied
Ashburnham	1,929	1,714	88.9%	215
Ashby	978	899	91.9%	79
Athol	4,487	3,156	70.3%	1,331
Ayer	2,982	1,661	55.7%	1,321
Clinton	5,597	3,028	41.1%	2,569
Fitchburg	14,943	7,708	51.2%	7,235
Gardner	8,282	4,520	54.6%	3,762
Groton	3,268	2,740	83.8%	528
Harvard	1,809	1,638	90.6%	171
Hubbardston	1,308	1,195	91.4%	113
Lancaster	2,049	1,622	79.2%	427
Leominster	16,491	9,545	57.9%	6,946
Lunenburg	3,535	3,085	87.3%	450
Petersham	438	362	82.6%	76
Phillipston	580	527	90.9%	53
Royalston	449	393	97.5%	56
Shirley	2,067	1,457	70.5%	610
Sterling	2,573	2,186	85.0%	387
Templeton	2,411	1,996	82.8%	415
Townsend	3,110	2,624	84.4%	486
Westminster	2,529	2,169	85.8%	360
Winchendon	3,447	2,492	72.3%	955

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the 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).

Number of Dwelling Units

	Number of Dwelling Units			% Change	% Change
	1980	1990	2000	'80-'90	'90-'00
Community					
Ashburnham	1,849	2,279	2,204	23.30%	-3.30%
Ashby	802	959	1,011	19.60%	5.40%
Athol	4,212	4,840	4,824	14.90%	-0.30%
Ayer	2,802	2,891	3,154	3.20%	9.10%
Clinton	4,943	5,635	5,844	14.00%	3.70%
Fitchburg	15,347	16,665	16,002	8.60%	-4.00%
Gardner	7,477	8,654	8,838	15.70%	2.10%
Groton	2,249	2,774	3,393	23.30%	22.30%
Harvard	2,807	3,141	2,225	11.90%	-29.20%
Hubbardston	623	1,025	1,360	64.50%	32.70%
Lancaster	2,010	2,095	2,141	4.20%	2.20%
Leominster	12,988	15,533	16,976	19.60%	9.30%
Lunenburg	3,133	3,486	3,668	11.30%	5.20%
Petersham	364	448	474	23.10%	5.80%
Phillipston	304	631	739	107.60%	17.10%
Royalston	358	469	526	31.00%	12.20%
Shirley	1,829	2,183	2,156	19.40%	-1.20%
Sterling	1,793	2,308	2,637	28.70%	14.30%
Templeton	2,082	2,276	2,597	9.30%	14.10%
Townsend	2,404	2,894	3,184	20.40%	10.00%
Westminster	1,982	2,405	2,694	21.30%	12.00%
Winchendon	2,636	3,349	3,660	27.00%	9.30%
Total	74,994	86,940	90,307	15.90%	3.90%

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

Communities with the highest percentage of homes with mortgages include Groton, Phillipston and Townsend. Communities with the lowest percentage of homes with mortgages include Athol, Clinton, Fitchburg and Petersham.

Mortgage Information Year 2000

City/Town	Mortgaged	Percent Mortgaged	Not Mortgaged	Percent Not Mortgaged
Ashburnham	1,125	75.9%	357	24.1%
Ashby	552	78.3%	153	21.7%
Athol	1,783	67.6%	853	32.4%
Ayer	999	76.4%	309	23.6%
Clinton	1,558	67.6%	747	32.4%
Fitchburg	3,736	66.9%	1,850	33.1%
Gardner	2,439	69.9%	1,048	30.1%
Groton	2,008	84.9%	357	15.1%
Harvard	1,110	77.4%	324	22.6%
Lancaster	1,059	73.9%	374	26.1%
Hubbardston	768	81.3%	177	18.7%
Leominster	5,465	72.1%	2,119	27.9%
Lunenburg	1,861	69.8%	807	30.2%
Petersham	152	67.6%	73	32.4%
Phillipston	350	84.3%	65	15.7%
Royalston	181	71.8%	71	28.2%
Shirley	810	74.3%	280	25.7%
Sterling	1,471	76.1%	461	23.9%
Templeton	1,240	73.9%	438	26.1%
Townsend	1,907	84.3%	355	15.7%
Westminster	1,424	71.0%	582	29.0%
Winchendon	1,546	79.0%	411	21.0%
Totals	33,544	73.3%	12,211	26.7%

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

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.

Subsidized Housing Units

	Year Round Units (2000)	Total Development Units	Total Subsidized Housing Units (SHI)	% Subsidized Housing Units
Ashburnham	1,997	146	61	3.1%
Ashby	1,000	0	0	0.0%
Athol	4,775	250	250	5.2%
Ayer	3,141	289	262	8.3%
Clinton	5,817	560	560	9.6%
Fitchburg	15,963	1,668	1,667	10.4%
Gardner	8,804	1,403	1,403	15.9%
Groton	3,339	269	192	5.8%
Harvard	2,156	193	61	2.8%
Hubbardston	1,348	56	56	4.2%
Lancaster	2,103	192	103	4.9%
Leominster	16,937	1,464	1,427	8.4%
Lunenburg	3,605	70	70	1.9%
Petersham	453	0	0	0.0%
Phillipston	598	6	6	1.0%
Royalston	470	3	3	0.6%
Shirley	2,140	61	61	2.9%
Sterling	2,611	66	56	2.1%
Templeton	2,492	313	200	8.0%
Townsend	3,162	92	86	2.7%
Westminster	2,609	276	123	4.7%
Winchendon	3,563	393	393	11.0%

Source: Department of Housing and Community Development – MGL Chapter 40B, Sections 20 through 23 Affordable Housing Statute – Subsidized Housing Inventory Through February 2008 (Updated 2/7/08 – MRPC)

(2) 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 exist a deficit of “assisted living” facilities for senior citizens. The Winchendon Housing Authority completed construction of such a facility while the Fitchburg Housing Authority is planning the construction of an assisted living center.

(3) Schools

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 (Monty Tech) located in Fitchburg and Leominster Center for Technical Education (LCTE) provide vocational training to high school students. Located in Gardner, Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC) offers two-year programs while Fitchburg State College offers four-year programs as does Atlantic Union College in Lancaster and University of Massachusetts-Lowell has a campus at Devens. In addition, there are many private sector educational operators offering training courses.

(4) 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.

(5) 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.

(6) Environmental Issues Relating to Flood Plains, Air Quality, Wetlands, Historic Preservation, Hazardous Waste Contamination, Smart Growth Initiatives, and Brownfield Reuse

Flood Plains. Within the Montachusett Region are located “500 Year” and “100 Year” Flood Plains. These flood plains are more prevalent in lowland areas near streams and tributaries linked to the Chicopee River, Millers River and Nashua River systems. A Federally-owned and operated flood control project known as the Birch Hill Reservation was created in the communities of Phillipston, Templeton, Royalston and Winchendon in order to control the Millers River, which is a tributary to the Connecticut River.

Wetlands. Wetlands exist in virtually every community in the Montachusett Region. They are protected under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act. Municipal Conservation

Commissions are responsible for reviewing projects for potential wetlands impacts and for ensuring that projects proponents do not unnecessarily disturb or destroy local wetlands.

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.

Hazardous Waste Contamination and Brownfield Reuse. The Montachusett Region has a rich history of manufacturing since the 19th Century. It is no secret that once bustling manufacturing sites are now brownfields. 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. Cleaning up and reinvesting in these properties takes development pressures off of undeveloped, open land, and both improves and protects the environment.”

According to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) there are more than 1,100 “brownfields” in the Montachusett Region, if one adheres to the strict Federal EPA meaning of a brownfield site. However, the vast majority of the DEP sites are “reportable releases” of, typically, a petroleum product that was addressed and removed from the site within 24 hours to three days of the initial occurrence. Additional information concerning the Massachusetts DEP and brownfields can be found in the appendix.

The MRPC through the MRCEDS process has aggressively and proactively sought out and helped to redevelop brownfields for active reuse. The following serves as a summary of the efforts of the MRPC, MRCEDS Committee and the MRBRI Steering Committee:

- 1997 – Montachusett Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Included “Brownfields Reuse” for 1st Time
- 1998 - MRCEDS Committee Appointed MRBRI Steering Committee (Private & Public Sector Reps)
- 1998 – More than 800 Brownfields Identified in the Montachusett Region
- Brownfields Goal Developed: Access Resources (Ex. Federal EPA Brownfields Dollars) to “Return brownfield sites to active reuse.” 1998, 2001, 2004, and 2007 – Federal EPA Awarded Brownfields Site Assessment Funds awarded to MRPC. To date, a total of 39 Phase I and Phase 2 Site Assessments have been completed.

Nineteen of the twenty-two communities in the Montachusett Region have “21E” or “brownfield” sites within their communities according to the Mass DEP. 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. With this in mind, all communities are encouraged to implement action steps that can be found in the MRCEDS Action Plan, below.

There remain, however, sites that appear to have had more of an impact upon the environment than “24 hour reportable releases”. Even some of these sites have been nominated for Phase One and Phase Two Site Assessments work managed by the MRPC with the assistance of Federal EPA Brownfield Site Assessment grant funds. Of the twenty sites nominated for study, at least half have been subject to site cleanup and redevelopment activities. Some of the Montachusett Region’s Brownfield Reuse success stories include:

- Fitchburg. Conversion of the former GE Steam Turbine Plant into Putnam Place for local business expansions. The City of Fitchburg and its Redevelopment Authority used EDA funds for pre-development and development costs.
- Gardner. Conversion of a former manufacturing site into a new public library.
- Gardner. Conversion of a former manufacturing site into additional municipal parking in the central business district.
- Gardner. Conversion of a former welding shop into three, new affordable homes for families. This innovative project was a team effort between the MRPC (which provided EPA Brownfield Site Assessment funds), the City of Gardner Department of Community Development and Planning (which provided Community Development Block Grant funds and technical assistance), the Greater Gardner Community Development Corporation (which provided construction management and homeowner identification and training services), Monty Tech High School (which provided the design and labor) and GFA Credit Union based in Gardner (which provided project financing).
- Leominster. Conversion of a former municipally-owned site into a site facilitating the expansion of an existing business and the creation of new jobs in the I-190 Industrial Park. The site is now home to Home of Crisci Tool & Die and Innovative Fulfillment Services.

Other successful regional projects that did not access EDA or EPA funding include:

- Ayer. Construction of New Fire Station on Brownfield in Downtown. Athol. Construction of New Police Station.
- Athol. Creation of Additional Parking in Downtown on Brownfield. In addition, both Fitchburg and Gardner have successfully accessed the EPA Brownfields Site Assessment Grant program to assess additional properties in the communities.

In 2001, the Federal EPA awarded a Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund (BCRLF) grant to the MRPC. Utilizing these funds, MRPC loaned Stone Street Realty Trust \$350,000 to cleanup the Former Amory Packaging Site located at 184 Stone Street in the Town of Clinton. Cleanup was successfully concluded in December 2007.

Smart Growth Initiatives. Under the State’s Office for Commonwealth Development, Sustainable Development Principles were developed. Having been updated in 2007, they are used as a guide by the Commonwealth to fund projects.

- Concentrate Development and Mixed Uses.
- Advance Equity.

- Make Efficient Decisions.
- Protect Land and Ecosystems.
- Use Natural Resources Wisely.
- Expand Housing Opportunities.
- Provide Transportation Choice.
- Increase Job and Business Opportunities.
- Promote Clean Energy.
- Plan Regionally.

Many communities in the Montachusett Region have Master/Comprehensive Plans (see Appendix C for statutory reference), Executive Order 418/Community Development Plans, Local or Regional Economic Development Plans, Open Space and Recreation Plans, Capital Improvements Plans, Watershed Protection Plans, Growth Management Plans, Sustainable Growth Management Plans and other plans relevant to the community.

VII. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THIS PLANNING EFFORT

Public Meetings and Input

One meeting of the MRCEDS Committee was held in June 2008. At this meeting, participants from all sectors identified goals, objectives, projects, strengths and weaknesses of the regional economy and helped develop performance measures by which the MRCEDS should be reviewed on an annual basis in the future.

Members of the Montachusett Economic Development District (MEDD) were invited to provide input into the revised document.

The Planning Commissioners were asked to comment on the revised MRCEDS at both its May and June meeting of the MPRC.

Regional Surveys

On March 18, 2008, 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. Responses were to be submitted no later than May 2008. Summaries of project requests needed, by community, are provided within the Action Plan.

Additionally, in this year's CEDS update there is an appendix that includes a Community Development Strategy (CDS) for each community within the Montachusett Region. A CDS is a document that summarizes various planning documents used by a community and serves as a plan of action intended to accomplish specific community development goals that will have an impact on the community. A CDS is a requirement for a community to apply for federal non-entitlement Community Development Block Grant funds. Many cities and towns in the region submitted a FY08 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application. For those communities that did not submit a FY08 application, MRPC contacted and offered assistance to either update or develop a CDS.

In May 2007, MRPC also distributed a survey to local officials in the twenty-two municipalities in the Montachusett Region in response to the award of a \$200,000 brownfield site assessment award, asking them to identify local "brownfields" that should undergo Phase One and Phase Two Site Assessments. The goal of assessing these sites is to help communities return abandoned and underutilized sites to active reuse. This program is ongoing while funds remain available.

VIII. STATE OF THE REGIONAL ECONOMY

A. *STRENGTHS*

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

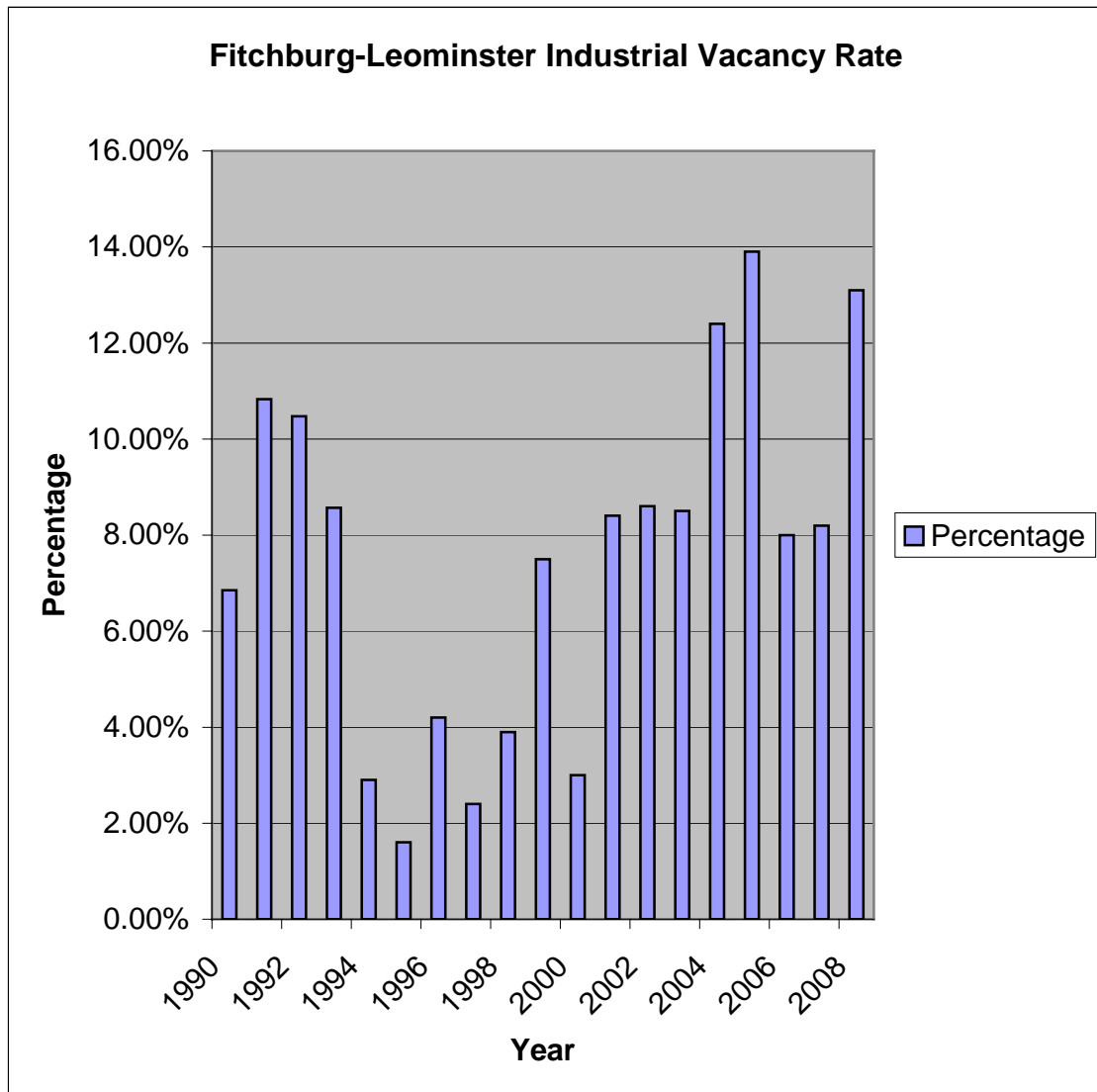
- The existence of a strong education, worker training and development system exists and works proactively with the business community to identify training needs and develop curricula needed by the commercial and industrial enterprises in the region.
- The regional economy has been working toward diversification.
- 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 College and Mount Wachusett Community College).
- The FSC and the MWCC are connected with Worcester State College 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.
- There are very 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.

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. For example, there are mill properties in various stages of being proposed or approved in Fitchburg including 1380 Main Street, 18 Newport Street, 93 Nockege Street, and part of 245 River Street. If these projects materialize, over 60,000 square feet of mill space will be removed from the industrial mill space market.

The vacancy rate of modern industrial space in the Fitchburg-Leominster area has ranged from a low of 1.60% in 1995 to a high of 13.90% in 2005. While the vacancy rate rose substantially from the year 2006 to 2007, it should be noted that almost half the rate is attributed to one large building (566,858 sq. ft. available) located at 25 Tucker Drive, Leominster that was vacated when the business sold in 2007.



Fitchburg-Leominster industrial vacancy rate information provided to the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission from The Foster Company, a firm experienced with real estate appraisal, consulting and property development, located at 100 Erdman Way, Leominster, MA, 01453-1804, 978-534-1350 (phone), 978-534-1913 (fax), <http://www.thefostercompany.com/contactus.html>.

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 inhibits regional business growth for large businesses as well as home-based entrepreneurs.

C. GROWTH SECTORS AND CLUSTERS

- A cluster exists within the Montachusett Region. It consists of manufacturers in the plastics, metals and paper products augmented by a growing food processing industry. These industries are supported by an existing services (finance, insurance, real estate and legal) and retail sectors.
- 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.

D. 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.

E. THREATS

Risks Associated with Not Implementing Plan Identified were identified as:

- 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 in the Montachusett Region. The region is threatened with a decline in job and pay quality and quantity. Any lack of training the workforce with enhanced skills for new and emerging employment opportunities will contribute to a decline in spending power.

F. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

A significant number of key organizations exist to plan for and implement economic planning and development projects. These are:

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 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. Industrial Development Commission.
- Winchendon. Community Development Office and Redevelopment Authority.

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.

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.

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.

Education and Job Training Partners

- Cushing Academy (Ashburnham) and Groton School (Groton) (private schools).
- Four College Consortium: Fitchburg State College, 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.

G. 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 continued 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 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.

IX. VISION

A. VISION STATEMENT

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, reporting, marketing, brownfields redevelopment, commercial and industrial land development, and 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 while we strive to preserve and balance open spaces enhancing the quality of lives of residents, making the area more attractive for business owners and employees considering business relocations and expansions.

B. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

2009 MRCEDS GOALS

- Utilize the current MRPC framework to coordinate and encourage community economic development.
- Upgrade the transportation system.
- Preserve existing housing and develop new opportunities for affordable housing.
- Strengthen and expand the region's business sector.
- Support and promote efficient public and private strategies for waste management throughout the region.
- Support, improve and promote locally-based community health systems.
- Develop and support a strong educational and training system that prepares the region's diverse population for employment.
- Work towards full employment opportunities for area residents that will provide incomes sufficient to sustain families.
- Strengthen business district revitalization efforts in Montachusett Region communities.
- Utilize the momentum created with the completion of Community Development and Comprehensive Plans to create a Regional Policy Plan.
- Encourage the development of and help to promote tourism in the region.
- Promote regional cooperation in housing, transportation and boundary development issues.
- Promote the diversification of jobs in the region into areas of growth and stability.
- 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.
- Encourage communities and businesses to keep employment growth in proportion to population and housing growth.
- Encourage the development of housing appropriate and affordable for the workforce needed by the businesses in the community.

C. ACTION PLAN

1. EDA WORK PLAN TASKS – 2008-2009

Task #1 MEC, Inc. Project Planning

Provide staff support to the newly created 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 at least five 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 With Preparing Grant Applications for Community and Economic Development Funding

Commonwealth Capital Funding for Community and Economic Development Funding. Assist communities with the completion of Massachusetts Commonwealth Capital Fund Program documents, making communities eligible for the program.

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.

Task #3 Expand the MRBRI Committee and Pursue Additional Brownfields Redevelopment Funding

Increase the level of private sector participation on the Montachusett Region Brownfield Reuse Initiative (MRBRI) Committee and utilize existing Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funds to further program benefits.

Task #4 Manage the EDIP Tax Incentives Program

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

Task #5 Maintain the Regional CEDS

Provide economic development data at least twice annually to community and economic development professionals in the Montachusett Region. The Montachusett Region will continue to implement its long-term Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy so as to create a strong and diversified economy.

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.
- 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.

**2. SHORT AND LONG TERM PROJECTS CARRIED FORWARD FROM 1999-2006
MRCEDS**

GOAL 1: Utilize the current MRPC framework to coordinate community economic development and encourage cooperation among all entities.

1. Educate communities to promote understanding of implementing integrated planning and economic development.
2. Encourage member communities to advocate one-stop shopping as part of the permitting process.
3. Encourage expansion of the local tax base by informing citizens about appropriate strategies for doing so to the residents.

GOAL 2: Upgrade the transportation system.

1. Upgrade the commuter rail station in Ayer and improve parking.
2. Create an inter-regional bus service between North Central Region and Worcester.
3. Create an inter-regional bus service between North Central Region and Greenfield.
4. Upgrade the State Route 2 from Phillipston to Orange to a limited access divided highway.
5. Improve access and operation along Rt. 2A from Littleton through Ayer.
6. Support the MRPC's efforts to improve the bus service (expand hours of operation and routes) especially to low and moderate-income neighborhoods.
7. Investigate the market potential of commuter freight planes from Fitchburg and other regional airports to other domestic and international hubs.
8. Return commuter rail service to Gardner.
9. Support the implementation of the environmental review and design of the Route 2 Connector to Fitchburg.
10. Provide additional parking for commuters at the North Leominster MBTA Commuter Rail station.
11. Create a Rt. 2 connector to downtown Fitchburg.
12. Improve access to and operation of Routes 13, 68, 117, 119, and 12.
13. Create an innovative high speed rail with appropriate signalization and commuter accommodations.
14. Support MBTA's mandate to create additional commuter rail sites for North Central MA.
15. Improve and upgrade existing commuter rail sites in Gardner, North Leominster, Shirley, Ayer and Littleton.
16. Encourage on-going improvements to shorten length of times for freight through this region.
17. Work with MBTA to extend commuter rail service between Greenfield and Boston.

18. Examine the feasibility of the re-use of unused rail for the purpose of re-establishing commuter and freight rail services between North Central MA and points south.
19. Continue the Interstate 190 corridor to New Hampshire, creating an essential third loop to complement Routes 495 and 128.
20. Provide and improve access to downtown Gardner.
21. Upgrade State Route 2 from Orange to Greenfield/Interstate 91 providing increased safety for vehicle and pedestrians.
21. Create alternative modes of transportation such as walking and biking paths for commuting and recreational purposes.

GOAL 3: Preserve existing housing and develop new opportunities for affordable housing.

1. Advocate for the development of affordable housing in the region.
2. Support programs such as home buyer education that promote and enable home ownership for low/moderate income persons in the region.
3. Increase funds for financial assistance programs for home buyers with low/moderate incomes.
4. Improve the quality of rental housing in the region.
5. Support housing rehabilitation programs to retain the region's housing stock.
6. 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.
7. Develop a plan to address the shortage of housing for low/moderate income persons.

GOAL 4: Strengthen and expand the region's business sector.

1. Support the efforts of organizations that provide non-traditional financing for businesses and self-employed individuals.
2. Support the activities of organizations in the region that provide technical assistance and networking opportunities to small businesses.
3. Support the efforts to recapitalize the North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation Microloan program and support efforts to achieve self sufficiency.
4. Support municipal and regional industrial planning and development efforts.
5. Maintain the regional inventory of industrial land and buildings.
6. 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.

7. Support existing industries and appropriate clustered industries.
8. Educate and offer technical assistance to communities on the most appropriate uses of existing industrial properties.
9. Support local efforts to use zoning as an industrial development tool.
10. Support the retention and expansion of existing manufacturing firms.
11. Support the recruitment of new manufacturing firms to the region.
12. Explore and support new ways to aggressively market the region for manufacturing, agriculture and tourism.
13. Provide ongoing technical assistance to communities on the State's Economic Development Incentive Program.
14. Develop additional commercial and industrial space such as Leominster Orchard Hill Industrial Park, Leominster I-190 Industrial Park, Athol Industrial Park, Leominster Industrial Park, Willow Road (Ayer), Westminster Business Park and Devens to accommodate business expansion.
15. Support efforts for local industrial incubators where needed.
16. Promote the creation of a suppliers network and encourage local businesses to buy locally.
17. Support utilities' efforts to design the extensions of natural gas pipelines into the Northeast United States and the Montachusett Region to provide an alternative, clean fuel for business and residential purposes.
18. Gain an understanding of the local high- speed telecommunications infrastructure and develop a plan that complements any existing efforts to support the development of e-commerce.
19. Support the creation of a technology center to assist in research and development and the transfer of technology to existing and new industries.
20. Consider a plan for industrial growth that includes industrial zoning, industrial parks and revenue and cost sharing.
21. Promote the reuse of the GE Turbine facility on River Street in Fitchburg to achieve full occupancy on the site and replace the 600 jobs lost.
22. Plan for and develop additional industrial land.
23. Support the development of a technology mall in complementing the North Street corridor revitalization efforts in Fitchburg.
24. Support the streamlining of municipal permitting processes for the business community.
25. Involve regional utility companies in industrial development planning.
26. 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.
27. Support utilities' efforts to construct natural gas pipelines into the Northeast United States and the Montachusett Region to provide an alternative, clean fuel for business and residential purposes.

GOAL 5: Support and promote efficient public and private strategies for waste management throughout the region.

1. Support waste separation and recycling programs.
2. Support local efforts to regionalize waste management.

3. Encourage the development of alternative energy systems that utilize the various waste stream components as the energy source.

GOAL 6: Support, improve and promote locally-based community health systems.

1. Encourage health care professionals to become involved in regional health care issues.
2. 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.
3. Support the formulation and implementation of a service development plan which 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.
4. Support the development of a comprehensive review of the physical plant assets of the health care delivery system in member communities.
5. Establish a community-based health center.

GOAL 7: Develop and support a strong educational and training system that prepares the region's diverse population for employment.

1. Support curriculum appropriate to the needs of the local business community.
2. Support School-to-Work, tech prep programs and other initiatives with similar goals that encourage students to have an occupational plan.
3. Support professional development for educators which enables them to better meet the needs of students who are changing racially and economically.
4. Support life-long learning initiatives: adult and basic education programs, and adults participation in vocational, practical arts and retraining programs.
5. Increase parental and community involvement in schools and training programs.

6. 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.
7. 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.
8. Aggressively seek local, state and federal funding to expand programs.
9. Design and implement more English as a second language programs to meet the needs of local residents.
10. 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.
11. Examine educational alternatives to meet the needs of pregnant and parenting teens and students in need of remedial services.
12. Develop and implement methods of measuring whether goals have been met at the individual school levels.
13. Encourage collaboration among school systems and the sharing of resources.
14. Advocate for redesign of curriculum to reflect a multitude of historical perspectives, rather than exclusively European viewpoints.

GOAL 8: Work towards full employment opportunities for area residents that will provide incomes sufficient to sustain families.

1. Support the creation of a comprehensive regional workforce development system.
2. Explore ways to provide opportunities for low- and moderate-income persons that will provide quality jobs with a future.

3. Support workforce development initiatives that are being developed with the plastics and other key industries in the Montachusett Region. One specific initiative that requires support is the Worklinks to Plastic program for educating, training, and supporting local people for full time, long-term, good-paying jobs in the plastics industry.
4. Identify organizations to provide safe, affordable, and accessible extended daycare programs for children of the working population.
5. Explore ways that businesses can participate in providing safe and affordable daycare for the children of their employees.
6. Explore ways for information about labor market conditions to be more efficiently shared among educators, employers and economic development agencies.
7. Explore ways for information about labor market conditions to be more efficiently shared among educators, employers and economic development agencies.
8. Explore ways of mapping the transportation needs of the working population.
9. Increase workforce competitiveness and productivity by supporting programs that retrain and upgrade skills, with an increased emphasis on transferable skills and technical education.

GOAL 9: Strengthen business district revitalization efforts within Montachusett Region communities.

1. Support and assist communities seeking funds for revitalization efforts.
2. Support local initiatives to encourage people to shop locally.
3. Encourage communities to conduct retail market analyses to determine the demand for services and products within the region's retail districts.
4. Support and encourage historic preservation efforts in communities.

5. Advocate communities identify unique opportunities within the region's business districts.
6. Support collaborative marketing of the region's business districts.
7. Support the development of a comprehensive signage program for business districts.
8. Support the establishment of on-going revitalization efforts through the use of public private partnerships.
9. Support efforts to retain and recruit downtown businesses.
10. Advocate business clustering strategies as a tool for business district revitalization efforts.
11. Promote the neighborhood business districts.
12. Support business association and other organizational efforts to recruit businesses into central business districts.
13. Support other entities' efforts to market the region as the place to live, work, start and grow businesses, and visit.
14. Examine the urbanization of North Central Massachusetts in a regional context.

3. LOCAL PROJECTS

CITY OF GARDNER

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM MONTACHUSETT REGION COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Contact Person: Kevin Flynn
Contact Name, Title, Address, Phone, Fax and E-mail:
Economic Development Coordinator, City of Gardner
115 Pleasant Street - Room 202, Gardner, MA 01440
(978) 630-4074 / (978) 632-1905
kflynn@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).

Mark P. Hawke, Mayor

Project Name and Location: Redevelopment of S. Bent Site
Mill Street, 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):

Implementation project: remediation of hazardous materials on former manufacturing site; demolition; and infrastructure improvements supporting job growth.

Brief Description of Local Project:

Remediation of brownfield hazards on this 27-acre former furniture manufacturing site. Demolition of abandoned, deteriorating buildings. Infrastructure improvements include: reconstruction of rail spur and road; installation of new gas main.

Proposed Project Schedule: Ready for Planning 2008-2009:**Planning or Construction Stage 2009-2011: X****Long Term Project, Beyond 2011: __**

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

Sources: EDA; EPA/DEP; MassDevelopment**Uses:** Feasibility; environmental remediation; demolition; infrastructure rehabilitation and improvements.**Estimated Number of Jobs to be Created or Retained: 100**

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

Legal, planning.**X. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

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John Hume Principal Planner Montachusett Regional Planning Commission R1427 Water Street Fitchburg, MA 01420	978-345-7376, x302 978-348-2490 (fax) jhume@mrpc.org (e-mail)

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

Contact Person: Kevin Flynn
Contact Name, Title, Address, Phone, Fax and E-mail:
Economic Development Coordinator, City of Gardner
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kflynn@gardner-ma.gov

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Mark P. Hawke, Mayor

Project Name and Location: Parking Deck, Derby Drive, 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):

Implementation project: construction of parking deck to support private investment for economic development in downtown Urban Renewal Area supporting job retention and job growth.

Brief Description of Local Project:

Design and construction of single level parking deck (approx. 73 spaces) to support the redevelopment of former industrial parcels in the Rear Main Street corridor in the downtown Urban Renewal Area. Current proposals call for medical office space and financial institution offices to be located adjacent to proposed parking deck. Additionally, parking needs assessment conducted in 2003 determined that the urban renewal area has a deficit of 317 parking spaces, of which 234 are in the immediate area of the proposed project.

Proposed Project Schedule: Ready for Planning 2008-2009: X
Planning or Construction Stage 2009-2011: X
Long Term Project, Beyond 2011: __

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

Sources: EDA, PWED, General Funds
Uses: Design and construction

Estimated Number of Jobs to be Created or Retained: 100

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

Engineering

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TOWN OF LANCASTER

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

**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,
P.O. Box 428, Lancaster, MA 01523, npiazza@lancasterma.net, 978-368-4007 (office), 978-
368-4009 (FAX)

PROJECTS TO BE SUBMITTED MUST BE APPROVED BY THE:

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REPRESENTING MINORITY AND LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME
POPULATIONS).**

**Christopher J. Williams, Chair
Lancaster Board of Selectmen**

Project Name and Location: Lancaster School Building Re-use Program

**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):** Rehabilitation and renovation of
three former school buildings for use as municipal offices, professional offices, school district
offices, and a community center.

Brief Description of Local Project: Rehabilitation and renovation of three former school buildings for use as municipal offices, professional offices, school district offices, and a community center.

Proposed Project Schedule: Ready for Planning 2008-2009: ____
Planning or Construction Stage 2009-2011: XX
Long Term Project, Beyond 2011: __

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

Sources: Capital budget appropriation, grants, donations, and a bond.
Uses: The cost for rehab/renovating all three buildings is approximately \$2.9M. These funds will be toward: Roofing, elevator systems, doors and windows, insulation/dry wall/plaster, interior/exterior painting, ceilings, flooring, finish carpentry, plumbing, electrical, lighting, security systems, sprinkler systems, communication systems, exterior re-pointing, and paving.

Estimated Number of Jobs to be Created or Retained: Up to 70 new jobs will be created and retained for the professional offices and the school district offices.

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

Architect, civil engineer, construction supervisor

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**Christopher J. Williams, Chair
Lancaster Board of Selectmen**

Project Name and Location: Lancaster Landfill Redevelopment 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): Redevelop the site of the former Lancaster landfill that is currently zoned for industrial/commercial development, and is surrounded by new and future development. This site could potentially create new jobs and broaden the tax base for the Town.

Brief Description of Local Project: Redevelopment of the former landfill site for economic development purposes. This 56-acre site is zoned as Light Industrial and is located in a prime area for commercial and industrial development. Over the last 5-10 years, this part of Town has blossomed with new businesses, ranging from industrial and commercial to recreational and medical. All of this activity is increasing the marketability of the Town land, and a development plan should be produced that outlines possible re-uses for this site.

Proposed Project Schedule: Ready for Planning 2008-2009: XX

Planning or Construction Stage 2009-2011: __
Long Term Project, Beyond 2011: __

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

Sources: Grants to support a land use study and a redevelopment plan.
Uses: The cost for a land use study is approximately \$15K. These funds will be used toward: Development of an existing conditions analysis, identification of potential alternatives for the site, and development of the re-use plan.

Estimated Number of Jobs to be Created or Retained: It is premature to estimate the number of new jobs until we know how the site will be redeveloped.

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

Land use consultant

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**Christopher J. Williams, Chair
Lancaster Board of Selectmen**

Project Name and Location: Route 2 Sewer 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): Extend the sewer line along the north side of Route 2 in order to assist in the expansion of businesses along this corridor.

Brief Description of Local Project: Extend the sewer line from Orchard Hill Park in Leominster to the Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center in Lancaster. This extension would allow for those businesses along this stretch of Rt. 2 to expand and create more jobs, such as the Orchard Hills Athletic Center, UMass Memorial/Health Alliance, and a new owner at Roll-On America.

Proposed Project Schedule: Ready for Planning 2008-2009:

Planning or Construction Stage 2009-2011: XX

Long Term Project, Beyond 2011: __

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

Sources: Orchard Hills Athletic Club, Town of Lancaster, grants.
Uses: The cost for extending the sewer line is approximately \$1.5M. Orchard Hills has committed toward contributing \$150K towards the design and construction. The Town of Lancaster has agreed to contribute \$100K towards the design. The balance must come from grant sources, such as CDAG, PWED and MORE.

Estimated Number of Jobs to be Created or Retained: The Orchard Hills expansion would create up to 50 new jobs. They are also looking at constructing an assisted living facility that could potentially employ more than 100 new staff. UMass Memorial/Health Alliance would also like to expand on this site and would create 10-15 new jobs.

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 sewer extension.

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Christopher J. Williams, Chair
Lancaster Board of Selectmen

Project Name and Location: Rt. 70/Old Union Turnpike Intersection Improvement 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): Installation and/or construction of improvements for the Rt. 70/Old Union Turnpike intersection.

Brief Description of Local Project: The intersection of Rt. 70 and Old Union Turnpike has higher than average crash rates and fatalities according to Mass. Highway. This area is also experiencing a much higher traffic use due to the new developments that have moved to the area in the last 5-10 years. The rate of development is expected to double in the next 10 years. It is critical that this intersection be improved, either by signalization or reconfiguration in order to greatly reduce the crash rate and to accommodate the significant traffic volumes for the new jobs that will be created.

Proposed Project Schedule: Ready for Planning 2008-2009:

Planning or Construction Stage 2009-2011: XX
Long Term Project, Beyond 2011: __

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

Sources: TIP, developer contributions, grants.

Uses: The cost to improve the intersection is approximately \$900K. This is for the physical construction of the intersection improvements. The design of the intersection has been funded by a developer in this area.

Estimated Number of Jobs to be Created or Retained: 300+

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

Traffic engineer, civil engineer.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

SUBMIT FORM IN HARD COPY OR ELECTRONIC FORMAT (MICROSOFT WORD) NO LATER THAN 5:00 PM, MONDAY, APRIL 28, 2008, TO:	ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF THIS FORM IS PREFERRED. THE DOCUMENT MAY BE DOWNLOADED AT THE MRPC “DOWNLOADS PAGE” AT www.mrpc.org.
John Hume Principal Planner Montachusett Regional Planning Commission R1427 Water Street Fitchburg, MA 01420	978-345-7376, x302 978-348-2490 (fax) jhume@mrpc.org (e-mail)

1. MOUNT WACHUSETT COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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

Contact Person: Edward R. Terceiro, Jr.

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

Executive Vice President, Mount Wachusett Community College
444 Green Street, Gardner, Massachusetts 01440
(978) 630-9102/ (978) 630-9559, 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).**

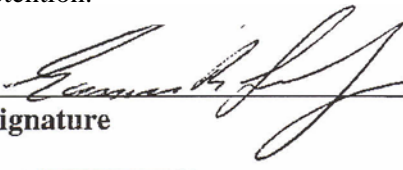
/s/ ~

Project Name and Location:

Biomanufacturing Training Facility, MWCC's Devens Campus

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, renovation of existing structure supporting job growth and retention.


Signature

\

Brief Description of Local Project:

Construction of 6,000± square-foot laboratory space adjacent to Bristol Myers Squibb for regional workforce training or retraining for positions in biomanufacturing.

Proposed Project Schedule: Ready for Planning 2008-
2009: _x_~ Construction Stage 2009-
2011: _x_ Long Term Project, Beyond
2011: ~

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

Sources: Economic Development
Administration Uses: Construction

Estimated Number of Jobs to be Created or Retained:
Will increase the college's capacity to train up to 20 new biotechnology technicians annually.

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

Financial.

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MONTACHUSETT

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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

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- 5. CIDEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OR PRESIDENT (ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING MINORITY AND LOW-AND MODERATE-INCOME POPULATION)**

Signature

Project Name and Location:

Automotive Technology Training Facility, MWCC's Gardner Campus

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, construction of new structure supporting job growth and retention.

Brief Description of Local Project:

Construction of 6,000± square-foot classroom and lab at the Gardner Campus for regional workforce training or retraining for positions in automotive technology. Site may feature new training program that gives technicians job training in the repair and maintenance of alternative fuel vehicles (hybrid, biodiesel, hydrogen, etc.).

Proposed Project Schedule: Ready for Planning 2008-2009: _x_

Construction Stage 2009-2011: _x_

Long Term Project, Beyond 2011: _

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

Sources: Economic Development

Administration Uses: Construction

Estimated Number of Jobs to be Created or Retained:

Will increase the college's capacity to train up to 45 new automotive technicians annually.

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

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

Signature

Project Name and Location:

Leominster Campus Expansion, MWCC's Leominster Campus

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, renovation of existing structure supporting job growth and retention.

Brief Description of Local Project:

Expansion of current classroom space at MWCC Leominster Campus by 10,000± square feet to expand academic and job training programs.

Proposed Project Schedule: Ready for Planning 2008-
2009: _x_ Construction Stage 2009-
2011: _x_ Long Term Project, Beyond
2011: _

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

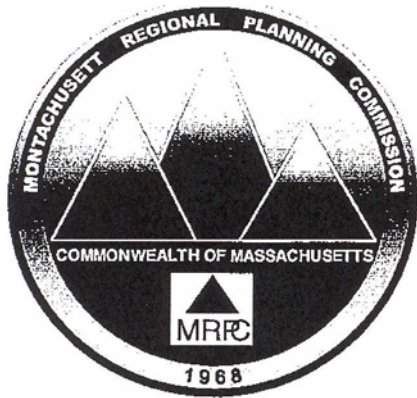
Sources: Various: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Economic
Development Administration
Uses: Construction

Estimated Number of Jobs to be Created or Retained:
Will increase the college's capacity to train up to 200 new workers annually in a
variety of business and technical careers.

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

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John Hurne Principal Planner Montachusett Regional Planning Commission RI427 Water Street Fitchbur~, MA 01420	978-345-7376, x302 978-348-2490 (fax) jhurne@mrpc.org (e-mail)



7.

MONTACHUSETT

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM MONTACHUSETT REGION COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

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3. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OR PRESIDENT (ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING MINORITY AND LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME POPULATION~

~~~~~

Signature

Project Name and Location:

Alternative Energy Development Site, MWCC's Gardner Campus

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, renovation of existing structure and construction of new structures supporting job growth and retention.

Brief Description of Local Project: Development of sources of alternative energy (e.g. wind, solar, biomass) at the Gardner Campus as a training and demonstration site. The site will have regional economic impact as local communities will be able to purchase power from the site at lower cost than from existing sources, and make them eligible for renewable energy tax credits.

Proposed Project Schedule: Ready for Planning 2008-2009: \_x\_ Construction Stage  
2009-2011: \_x\_ Long Term Project, Beyond 2011: \_

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

Sources: Various: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, US Department of Energy, Economic Development Administration  
Uses: Construction

Estimated Number of Jobs to be Created or Retained:

Will increase the college's capacity to train up to 25 new workers annually in a variety of jobs as alternative energy technicians.

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

#### SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

|                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| John Hume<br>Principal Planner<br>Montachusett Regional Planning Commission<br>R1427 Water Street<br>Fitchburg, MA 01420 | 978-345-7376, x302<br>978-348-2490 (fax)<br><a href="mailto:jhume@mrpc.org">jhume@mrpc.org</a> (e-mail)                                                         |

#### **4. Other Local Projects by Community, Sub-Region or Region**

##### **a) Ashburnham**

- A phase 1 site assessment was completed on January 10, 2008 for the Town of Ashburnham (Cheshire Branch of the Fitchburg Railroad). The site consists of a total area of approximately 40.3 acres formerly used as a railroad line, located in the western portion of Ashburnham from Route 101 (Gardner Road) north to the Winchendon Town Line.
- A Natural Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan is near completion for the community with assistance from MRPC. This plan is integrated with a regional plan as well as the overall state plan. Plans need local, state and federal approval and will make communities eligible for pre-disaster mitigation funding. The report outlines actions that can be taken now to reduce the impact of natural disasters when and if they occur. The plan also reduces the region's vulnerability to natural disasters by effectively identifying appropriate projects for funding made available in the future.
- The Town was awarded \$651,789 in FY 05 Community Development Block Grant funds to conduct the installation of new water lines within the Page Beach Neighborhood. Funds were also used to assist five homeowners with the installation of a new service line to their home. The project came in ahead of schedule and under budget. Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) granted an extension to this contract to allow the town to use the remaining funds to complete the paving portion of the project in the spring of 2007.
- The Town's of Lunenburg, Lancaster, Townsend and Ashburnham were awarded \$1,183,249.00 in FY 07 Community Development Block Grant funds to conduct a 4-town regional housing rehab and housing counseling programs within each community. This program is currently underway.
- Senior Center Feasibility Study. Funding was approved at May 2007 Annual Town Meeting. MRPC and the architecture firm, Caolo & Bienick Associates, Inc., were then hired to do a Senior Center Feasibility Study. The project began by review existing conditions of the Town's VMS Building, which is located in the Village Center behind Ashburnham Town Hall and adjacent to the Stevens Memorial Library. Once the Police and Fire relocate to the newly constructed Public Safety Building, this building will be available for renovation. The Study also included a survey of Ashburnham Seniors to assist in determining space needs for a renovated VMS Building. In April 2008 the Feasibility Study was completed. May 2008 Town Meeting Voters did approve \$80,000 for the design plans, but approval is subject to an override vote in June 2008. The design plans would then allow the Town to apply for a CDBG grant application of up to \$800,000 to be used for renovation of the VMS Building.
- On June 9, 2007, the Town of Ashburnham held a Charrette that was facilitated, pro-bono, by the Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance and the architecture and planning firm, Goody-Clancy, for public input related to planning for redevelopment of the 4.2-acre existing Highway Barn Site. The Site has been the subject of both a Phase I Site Assessment and an "enhanced" Phase I Site Assessment. The Town's participation in the Central Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance during 2006 led to the Town being chosen for a Pilot Project on Smart Growth in Central Massachusetts. About 30 citizens and Town

officials attended the June 2007 Charrette. Those in attendance did indicate support for a mixed-use Smart Growth type of project once the existing Highway Department is able to be relocated. In September 2007, the Town received a final report titled “Ashburnham Highway Barn Site Charrette: Report and Recommendations” from the Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance.

- In December 2007, the Town received the Final, Revised “Ashburnham Industrial Land Use Suitability Analysis and Assessment” Report from the University of Massachusetts Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning. The Report was prepared by the UMass Amherst Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning Students in the Fall of 2006. However, after the Planning Board and Town Planner reviewed the Report in early 2007, we felt it required some grammatical and formatting changes, as well as the addition of more substantive information regarding funding sources of infrastructure and about the creative economy as an economic development tool. The goal of this report was to evaluate existing industrial sites and propose potential areas to be zoned for industrial uses. It provides the Town with information regarding: 1) research of market demand and industry trends; 2) assessment criteria used to evaluate industrial-zoned lands—both existing and proposed sites, and 3) provides zoning, financial and other economic development recommendations for the Town to consider.

**b) Ashby**

- The Town of Ashby drafted a Low Impact Development (LID) zoning bylaw amendment with assistance from MRPC. The Planning Board met and held several working sessions to develop the LID model bylaw. The community adopted the bylaw at the 2006 fall Special Town Meeting.
- A Natural Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan is near completion for the community with assistance from MRPC. This plan is integrated with a regional plan as well as the overall state plan. Plans need local, state and federal approval and will make communities eligible for pre-disaster mitigation funding. The report outlines actions that can be taken now to reduce the impact of natural disasters when and if they occur. The plan also reduces the region’s vulnerability to natural disasters by effectively identifying appropriate projects for funding made available in the future.
- Townsend, Ashby, and Ashburnham were awarded \$600,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds in 2005. MRPC staff worked with the three towns to complete their regional housing rehabilitation program. DHCD granted an extension to allow for the completion of several septic projects that was completed in 2007.

**c) Athol**

- At the April 30, 2007 Annual Town Meeting it was voted that the Town accept provisions of Chapter 43D of the MA General Laws as amended pursuant to Section 11 of Chapter 205 of the acts of 2006. The filing of a formal proposal with the Interagency Permitting Board was initiated and approved for the designation of Priority Development Sites within the following areas: Bearsden Economic Opportunity Area (EOA); North Quabbin Business Park EOA; Downtown EOA; and LPL LLC – Mohawk Plaza EOA
- A Natural Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan is near completion for the community with assistance from MRPC. This plan is integrated with a regional plan as well as the overall

state plan. Plans need local, state and federal approval and will make communities eligible for pre-disaster mitigation funding. The report outlines actions that can be taken now to reduce the impact of natural disasters when and if they occur. The plan also reduces the region's vulnerability to natural disasters by effectively identifying appropriate projects for funding made available in the future.

- Other projects that the Town is working on include the opening of an equestrian park which is scheduled to begin holding shows this year and ongoing efforts to expand the downtown district.

**d) Ayer**

- The Town of Ayer is working to reorganize the Ayer Zoning Bylaw to make it more functional and improve it as it relates to the Downtown.
- At the Fall 2007 Special Town Meeting it was voted that the Town accept provisions of Chapter 43D of the MA General Laws (See Attachment 1, Chapter 43D of the MA General Laws) as amended pursuant to Section 11 of Chapter 205 of the acts of 2006, and to approve the filing of a formal proposal with the Interagency Permitting Board for the designation as an overlay for land within the Healthcare Services District. The Health Care Services District comprises the portions located in Ayer of a parcel, which is known as 200 Groton Road (a/k/a Washington Street). See Town of Ayer Zoning Bylaws for Boundaries of District. A guidebook is also being developed to streamline the permitting process by presenting a description of the permitting process for both applicants and Town staff in the Town of Ayer. It is intended solely for the development of Chapter 43D Priority Development Sites that are located in the Town of Ayer and is only to be used for such purposes.
- A Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment was performed for the property identified as the Nashua River Rail Trail Parking Lot Site located at Park Street. The site consists of an approximate 0.15-mile inactive railroad right-of-way located in downtown Ayer between Park Street and Pearl Street.
- A Natural Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan is near completion for the community with assistance from MRPC. This plan is integrated with a regional plan as well as the overall state plan. Plans need local, state and federal approval and will make communities eligible for pre-disaster mitigation funding. The report outlines actions that can be taken now to reduce the impact of natural disasters when and if they occur. The plan also reduces the region's vulnerability to natural disasters by effectively identifying appropriate projects for funding made available in the future.

**e) Clinton**

- In 2001, the Federal EPA awarded a Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund (BCRLF) grant to the MRPC. Utilizing these funds, MRPC loaned Stone Street Realty Trust \$350,000 to cleanup the Former Amory Packaging Site located at 184 Stone Street in the Town of Clinton. Cleanup was successfully concluded in December 2007.
- A Natural Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan has been completed for the community with assistance from MRPC. This plan is integrated with a regional plan as well as the overall state plan. Plans need local, state and federal approval and will make communities eligible for pre-disaster mitigation funding. The report outlines actions that can be taken now to

reduce the impact of natural disasters when and if they occur. The plan also reduces the region's vulnerability to natural disasters by effectively identifying appropriate projects for funding made available in the future.

- FY'06 CDAG Award (\$777K) to replace waterlines in the downtown and greater downtown target area.
- FY'08 CDAG Award (\$986K) to replace more waterlines in the greater downtown target area.
- FY'08 MORE Jobs Grant Award (\$665K) to create 35 new parking spaces on Pleasant Street, which is part of the greater downtown target area, create stairway access from Pleasant Street to Nypro's Parking Lot, and install new drainage lines on Nypro's property. In turn, Nypro committed to invest at least \$10M in their property and create 100 new jobs over 5 years.
- FY'07 saw the approval of 3 TIFs for Nypro, Scholastic Book Fairs, and Clinton Savings Bank.
- FY'08 will see the completion of the Town's Master Plan. This is the result of \$125K investment in a Master Plan that was approved at the June 2006 Annual Town Meeting.

**f) Devens**

- Bristol-Myers Squibb's announced its decision to construct a \$750 million manufacturing plant at Devens, employing 350 at the outset (fall 2009) and eventually employing up to 550 employees. Bristol-Myers Squibb's decision to build a production facility in Devens was a significant milestone for the state's biotech industry. The plant, already under construction, is due to include four buildings covering about 397,000 square feet in its first phase. The company produces Orencia, a biological treatment for rheumatoid arthritis. Future expansion phases on the site could take employment up to 1,000 people. The Devens plant is the largest single capital investment in Bristol-Myers Squibb's history, a project due to be operationally complete in 2009 and ready to go before federal regulators in 2010. This is the biggest private investment by far in Devens, which is already home to about 80 companies.

**g) Fitchburg**

- Chapter 43D was adopted in Fitchburg. In 2007 there was a majority vote of the local governing body (City Council) to accept provisions of Chapter 43D of the MA General Laws, as amended, pursuant to Section 11 of Chapter 205 of the Acts of 2006, and to approve the filing of an application with the Interagency Permitting Board for the designation of three (3) Priority Development Sites. Priority Development Sites, all zoned for industrial purposes and approved by the state's Interagency Permitting Board, include 135 Intervale Road, 0 Princeton Road, and 0 Airport Road.
- A Natural Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan is near completion for the community with assistance from MRPC. This plan is integrated with a regional plan as well as the overall state plan. Plans need local, state and federal approval and will make communities eligible for pre-disaster mitigation funding. The report outlines actions that can be taken now to reduce the impact of natural disasters when and if they occur. The plan also reduces the region's vulnerability to natural disasters by effectively identifying appropriate projects for funding made available in the future.

#### h) Gardner

Urban Revitalization Plan. In an effort to further the overall revitalization of the central business district, and the redevelopment of former industrial sites in Rear Main Street, the City, in cooperation with the Gardner Redevelopment Authority (GRA) has undertaken to establish an Urban Renewal Area within the downtown area of the City. The URP process started in November 2005 with the formation of an Urban Renewal Plan Steering Committee, a dedicated group of residents, business owners and municipal officials that established the framework for the URP by defining the Urban Renewal Area and securing funding for the study. The Urban Revitalization Plan submitted by RKG Associates in September 2007 identified 3 preferred implementation options for the Rear Main Street corridor. Additional traffic and engineering studies are ongoing.

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 Urban Renewal Area; and the former S. Bent factory site. The City will use a technical assistance grant to implement the statute locally.

Economic Development Coordinator. In early 2008 the City of Gardner, in cooperation with the Gardner Redevelopment Authority and Greater Gardner Industrial Foundation, created the new position of Economic Development Coordinator. The position is responsible to develop and implement strategic plans to retain and attract business and industry to the city, represent the city to various public and private entities; coordinate economic development efforts; compile and distribute economic development information and assist local businesses.

Heywood Wakefield Assisted Living Project (HW3). The project received a \$9.3 million HUD grant to construct 78 units of affordable assisted living. The project has also received preliminary approval for \$10.9 million of tax-exempt financing from MassDevelopment. A request for \$1.75 million of additional financing is pending with DHCD and the Massachusetts Affordable Housing Trust. A preliminary application for \$175,000 in CDAG funding for improvements to Pine Street is also pending.

The North End Rear Main Street Redevelopment Project includes a medical office building for Heywood Hospital, an office building for a local financial institution and supporting public infrastructure. In conjunction with the National Development Council the City and Heywood Hospital are exploring a creative financing arrangement that combines New Market Tax Credits and the HUD 108 program. A key component of this project is the development of additional parking to support the proposed developments. 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. Of these, 234 spaces are needed in the immediate vicinity of the North End of Rear Main Street. A feasibility study prepared in conjunction with the parking needs assessment indicated that 73 new spaces can be accommodated by the construction of a single story parking deck, and that this expansion would, in part, meet the demand for additional spaces in this key downtown area.

District Improvement Financing. The City has prepared an application to establish a District Improvement Financing (DIF) plan for the downtown Urban Renewal Area and for proposed development at the Route 140 / Route 101 area in order to simulate and encourage private investment through strategic public investments. The DIF program, created by MGL 40Q in 2003, permits a portion of future property tax revenue collected from new private investment within the DIF District to pay for debt service for bonds used to finance public infrastructure improvements. Mount Wachusett Community College Biomass and Biotechnology Projects. Mount Wachusett Community College has received federal grants to support its biomass energy project, which converts waste products from local wood manufacturing activities into energy to power the college facilities. The college also received a federal grant to train students to prepare them for careers in biotechnology and bioengineering jobs.

Bent Mill reuse project. The City acquired the S. Bent Mill in early 2007 through a tax title foreclosure. Formerly a furniture manufacturing complex, the property contains 27 acres of land and 250,000 SF of derelict mill building unsuitable for reuse. Using a combination of grants and loans from EPA, DEP and MassDevelopment, the City's environmental engineering consultants will complete 21E assessment work in summer 2008, with remediation completed in September. Additional funding is needed to demolish the abandoned, deteriorated mill buildings, to upgrade the rail spur and road, and to extend the gas main to the site.

Heritage State Park Center. The downtown Visitors Center was closed due to budget cuts by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) more than 5 years ago. The facility is located in the former Lake Street Fire Station donated by the City to the State about 20 years ago. Mayor Hawke has approached DCR on several occasions to discuss options that would reopen the downtown Visitors Center, a critical piece of the Urban Revitalization Plan.

**i) Groton**

- In the Fall of 2007 it was voted at Town Meeting that the Town accept provisions of Chapter 43D of the MA General Laws (See Attachment 1, Chapter 43D of the MA General Laws) as amended pursuant to Section 11 of Chapter 205 of the acts of 2006. The filing of a formal proposal with the state's Interagency Permitting Board was approved for the designation of the Station Overlay District as a Priority Development Site.
- A Natural Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan is near completion for the community with assistance from MRPC. This plan is integrated with a regional plan as well as the overall state plan. Plans need local, state and federal approval and will make communities eligible for pre-disaster mitigation funding. The report outlines actions that can be taken now to reduce the impact of natural disasters when and if they occur. The plan also reduces the region's vulnerability to natural disasters by effectively identifying appropriate projects for funding made available in the future.

**j) Harvard**

- A Natural Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan is near completion for the community with assistance from MRPC. This plan is integrated with a regional plan as well as the overall state plan. Plans need local, state and federal approval and will make communities eligible for pre-disaster mitigation funding. The report outlines actions that can be taken now to reduce the impact of natural disasters when and if they occur. The plan also reduces the

region's vulnerability to natural disasters by effectively identifying appropriate projects for funding made available in the future.

- Harvard Massachusetts Master Plan, November 2002  
Prepared by Community Opportunities Group Inc., Community Planning Solutions and Abend Associates. Adopted by the Planning Board and was a 10 year update from the 1988 Harvard Town Plan.
- Harvard Town Center Action Plan, March 2005  
A comprehensive mini-master plan for Harvard's historic town center that focuses on the pro-active actions necessary to support and sustain the Center's vitality and mix of activities while simultaneously preserving the center's classic village character in a comprehensive, rather than in a project-by-project or issue-by-issue basis. It examines the Center from a wide variety of perspectives - such as the maintenance and strengthening of vitality, preservation of existing and creation of new 'public gathering places', an increased diversity of housing choices for Harvard's seniors, needed zoning changes, municipal facility and institutional expansion and reuse needs, traffic and parking, increased pedestrian safety and trail linkages to open spaces, historic preservation, recreational opportunities, water supply, and very importantly, the necessity to provide sufficient septic capacity to support many of the other goals listed above.
- Report to the Harvard School Committee : Proposed Long Range Facilities Plan March 24, 2003  
A report concerning school population growth and how the town could accommodate that eventual increase. Defines a strategy for both short and long term needs: population trigger points and analysis of existing capacities.
- 2003 Harvard Open Space and Recreation Plan (currently undergoing a 5 year update)  
A report representing the town's comprehensive approach to protecting its abundant scenic and natural resources, and to provide recreational opportunities for the public to connect with and enjoy Harvard's varied and scenic landscape. It contains a detailed description of the town and concludes with a five-year action plan and is a tool to be used by local leaders to help ensure that the town maintains its scenic beauty and landscape character, while working to accommodate growth. The themes of the Open Space and Recreation Plan are protection of water resources, development of a conservation greenway, and wildlife habitat preservation. The Plan is based on the premise that conservation of critical natural and water resources, expansion and improvement of conservation land and protection of habitat are necessary to maintain a sustainable regional environment and the quality of the life for the region's citizens.
- Comprehensive Source Protection Plan for the Pond Road and Bolton Road Wells in Harvard, Massachusetts PWS ID No. 2125000
- June 2006 (Revised: July 2006) Prepared by: Mass Rural Water Association. A comprehensive review and risk assessment of Harvard's limited public water supply located within the historic town center.

**k) Hubbardston**

- A Natural Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan is near completion for the community with assistance from MRPC. This plan is integrated with a regional plan as well as the overall state plan. Plans need local, state and federal approval and will make communities eligible for pre-disaster mitigation funding. The report outlines actions that can be taken now to

reduce the impact of natural disasters when and if they occur. The plan also reduces the region's vulnerability to natural disasters by effectively identifying appropriate projects for funding made available in the future.

- The Open Space Committee recently updated the Hubbardston Open Space Plan with the assistance of MRPC on update of mapping. The Plan requires the approval of the State and support from local boards and committees and has received tentative approval from DCR. The updated plan is meant to serve the long-term interest of the residents, enhancing the quality of life in Hubbardston, protecting open space and wildlife habitat, and improved recreational facilities, all while attempting to cope with the expanse of urban sprawl.
- The Hubbardston Board of Health is actively working on a comprehensive emergency plan to ensure Hubbardston is prepared in the event of a pandemic emergency, integrated with a regional plan as part of the Worcester Regional Medical Reserve Corps (WRMRC) and also the Region 2 Emergency Preparedness Committee. The MRC is part of the Citizen Corps, a national network of volunteers dedicated to ensuring homeland security. Community-based, the MRC units function as a way to both promote healthy living and to prepare for, and respond to, emergencies. Volunteers supplement existing local emergency and public health resources.

#### **1) Lancaster**

- A Natural Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan is near completion for the community with assistance from MRPC. This plan is integrated with a regional plan as well as the overall state plan. Plans need local, state and federal approval and will make communities eligible for pre-disaster mitigation funding. The report outlines actions that can be taken now to reduce the impact of natural disasters when and if they occur. The plan also reduces the region's vulnerability to natural disasters by effectively identifying appropriate projects for funding made available in the future.
- A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was completed on March 21, 2008 for the Lancaster Depot located at 0 Packard Street near the corner of Packard Street and Harvard Street. The site is an approximately 0.25 acre lot with one single-story building constructed between 1910 and 1922. Since development, the site has been utilized for municipal equipment storage purposes.
- A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was completed on April 4, 2008 for the Town of Lancaster Public Landfill located on Lunenburg Road. The Site consists of an unlined, capped and closed municipal landfill, vegetated with grass, which covers an area of approximately seven acres. The landfill was opened in 1960 and capped in 1994. Since that time there has been no activity on-Site.
- The Town was awarded \$1,183,249.00 in Community Development Block Grant funds to conduct a 4-town regional housing rehab and housing counseling programs within the towns of Lancaster, Lunenburg, Townsend and Ashburnham.
- The Town of Lancaster has also made many other significant recent accomplishments including adopting the Lancaster Master Plan in December 2007; passing a zoning amendment in May 2008 to allow the use of accessory apartments, enacting a Stormwater Management bylaw, an Illicit Discharge bylaw, and a Wetlands Protection bylaw in October 2007; applying for a MORE grant to fund a sewer extension in North Lancaster so that several local businesses can expand and add jobs, completed an Integrated Water Resource Management Plan for bringing public water and sewer to North Lancaster; applying for a seed grant through the North Central Massachusetts Economic Development Council to

fund a Land Use Study for the former landfill and its potential for industrial/commercial re-use; exploring the Chapter 43D Expedited Permitting program to bring to the Special Town Meeting in the fall for a vote; working to revise the zoning along the Route 2 corridor to bring more commercial establishments into the community; completing the 2008 Commonwealth Capital application; submitting three projects for intersection improvements to Mass. Highway for approval and addition to the region's Traffic Improvement Plan (one of these projects will move forward to the Project Identification stage); established an Open Space and Recreation Committee and an Agricultural Commission in May 2008, Currently updating the 2000 Open Space and Recreation Plan with an anticipated completion date of July 2008; updated the Lancaster Trails Map; applied for a Community Development Action Grant to fund the renovation/rehabilitation of three former school buildings; applied for a Mass. Historical Preservation Grant to fund the replacement of the roof and windows on one of the former school buildings; updated the Lancaster Zoning Map, Zoning Overlay Map, and the Street Map.

**m) Leominster**

- In the Spring of 2007, the City of Leominster accepted provisions of Chapter 43D of the MA General Laws as amended pursuant to Section 11 of Chapter 205 of the acts of 2006. The filing of a formal proposal with the Interagency Permitting Board was approved.
- A Natural Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan is being completed for the community with assistance from MRPC. This plan is integrated with a regional plan as well as the overall state plan. Plans need local, state and federal approval and will make communities eligible for pre-disaster mitigation funding. The report outlines actions that can be taken now to reduce the impact of natural disasters when and if they occur. The plan also reduces the region's vulnerability to natural disasters by effectively identifying appropriate projects for funding made available in the future.
- The City has addressed multiple topics including helping organize the re-use of the Twin Cities Rail-bed for a bike trail, expansion of Routes 12 and 13, assisting downtown/neighborhood merchants with attracting customers and increasing their business all year, and continuing negotiations with CSX Railway regarding the Twin Cities Rail Trail.
- Over the last two years, the City has applied for approximately \$2.3 million through Public Works Economic Development Grants which will assist in creating a road for an industrial subdivision which abuts the Town of Sterling. In addition, the City has also been awarded a MORE Fund Grant through the State for \$1,000,000. This grant, much like the PWED, was submitted on behalf of the Southgate Business Park. The City has also just submitted an additional MORE Fund application in the amount of \$2.7 million for the Tanzio Road Business Park. Much like the aforementioned Southgate Project, this grant if awarded would be utilized for road construction and utility work for the entire Tanzio site enabling the creation of pad ready business sites.
- Leominster Gateway Baseball Complex is another major economic development project that the City has been working on over the past year. This project will turn a once functioning landfill and now empty 30 acre parcel into a 3,000 seat professional baseball complex accompanied by a 100 unit hotel and two 250 seat restaurant pads. The ballpark project will abut the new Fidelity Bank building at the Leominster Connector on Mechanic Street. The multi-use project will create not only jobs and tremendous economic opportunities to surrounding businesses but it will provide a vibrant gateway into the City. The City is in the

process of developing a financing package that will benefit all parties involved in the project.

- To enhance business opportunities in the downtown, the City of Leominster, Business Development Coordinator planned and hosted three Downtown events, which were deemed very successful. All three events were themed as one occurred for Halloween another for the Holiday Season and the last event, the “Summer Stroll”, was held in June and was designed to bring Leominster back to the 50’s and 60’s. Each event brought large crowds to the downtown that normally would not be there on a weekend and as a result businesses benefited and welcome future events.
- Leominster Economic/Business Development staff continues to manage the business advertising billboard which was created two years ago. The board, which is located at the Leominster Connector off Route 2 & 190 features magnetic advertisements for Leominster businesses allowing for tremendous exposure due to the strategic placement.

**n) Lunenburg**

- A Natural Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan is near completion for the community with assistance from MRPC. This plan is integrated with a regional plan as well as the overall state plan. Plans need local, state and federal approval and will make communities eligible for pre-disaster mitigation funding. The report outlines actions that can be taken now to reduce the impact of natural disasters when and if they occur. The plan also reduces the region’s vulnerability to natural disasters by effectively identifying appropriate projects for funding made available in the future.
- The Town’s of Lunenburg, Lancaster, Townsend and Ashburnham were awarded \$1,183,249.00 in Community Development Block Grant funds to conduct a 4-town regional housing rehab and housing counseling programs within each community.

**o) Petersham**

- A Natural Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan is near completion for the community with assistance from MRPC. This plan is integrated with a regional plan as well as the overall state plan. Plans need local, state and federal approval and will make communities eligible for pre-disaster mitigation funding. The report outlines actions that can be taken now to reduce the impact of natural disasters when and if they occur. The plan also reduces the region’s vulnerability to natural disasters by effectively identifying appropriate projects for funding made available in the future.
- Petersham was awarded FY05 \$113,875 in Community Development Block Grant funds for two projects; Demolition and ADA Improvements. The demolition of the Davenport property was completed in September of 2006. The Town also worked with MRPC and a consultant on the ADA Improvements to the Town owned buildings.

**p) Phillipston**

- A Natural Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan is near completion for the community with assistance from MRPC. This plan is integrated with a regional plan as well as the overall state plan. Plans need local, state and federal approval and will make communities eligible for pre-disaster mitigation funding. The report outlines actions that can be taken now to

reduce the impact of natural disasters when and if they occur. The plan also reduces the region's vulnerability to natural disasters by effectively identifying appropriate projects for funding made available in the future.

**q) Royalston**

- A Natural Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan is near completion for the community with assistance from MRPC. This plan is integrated with a regional plan as well as the overall state plan. Plans need local, state and federal approval and will make communities eligible for pre-disaster mitigation funding. The report outlines actions that can be taken now to reduce the impact of natural disasters when and if they occur. The plan also reduces the region's vulnerability to natural disasters by effectively identifying appropriate projects for funding made available in the future.

**r) Shirley**

- A Natural Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan is near completion for the community with assistance from MRPC. This plan is integrated with a regional plan as well as the overall state plan. Plans need local, state and federal approval and will make communities eligible for pre-disaster mitigation funding. The report outlines actions that can be taken now to reduce the impact of natural disasters when and if they occur. The plan also reduces the region's vulnerability to natural disasters by effectively identifying appropriate projects for funding made available in the future.

**s) Sterling**

- In July of 2007, the Town was awarded \$884,409 in Community Development Block Grant funds to conduct infrastructure and housing rehabilitation projects in the Washacum Village neighborhood.
- A Natural Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan is near completion for the community with assistance from MRPC. This plan is integrated with a regional plan as well as the overall state plan. Plans need local, state and federal approval and will make communities eligible for pre-disaster mitigation funding. The report outlines actions that can be taken now to reduce the impact of natural disasters when and if they occur. The plan also reduces the region's vulnerability to natural disasters by effectively identifying appropriate projects for funding made available in the future.

**t) Templeton**

- In late 2006, the Massachusetts Economic Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) awarded 50 communities throughout the commonwealth grants to assist in land use planning and smart growth efforts and the projects awarded to Templeton included the development of a number of zoning bylaws. Over the course of several months, the Town of Templeton's Citizens Zoning Advisory Committee, with the assistance of the

Montachusett Regional Planning Commission, prepared zoning bylaws according to input received from citizens, local officials, and a survey that was conducted from a prior EOEA Smart Growth grant. At a Templeton Special Town Meeting held in March 2008, all warrant articles passed including a Wind Energy Conversion System Bylaw, Inclusionary Housing Bylaw, Open Space Residential Bylaw, and amendments to the existing bylaw.

- A Feasibility Study of a Brownfield site known as the Former Holman/Temple-Stuart Site now owned by American Tissue Mills of Massachusetts was undertaken utilizing EOEEA Smart Growth funds by the Town with assistance from MRPC. The study was completed and presented in the Spring of 2008.
- A Natural Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan is near completion for the community with assistance from MRPC. This plan is integrated with a regional plan as well as the overall state plan. Plans need local, state and federal approval and will make communities eligible for pre-disaster mitigation funding. The report outlines actions that can be taken now to reduce the impact of natural disasters when and if they occur. The plan also reduces the region's vulnerability to natural disasters by effectively identifying appropriate projects for funding made available in the future.
- Other accomplishments by the Town include the adoption of the Community Preservation Act and the receipt of a DCR Natural Heritage Program grant.

**u) Townsend**

- A Natural Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan is near completion for the community with assistance from MRPC. This plan is integrated with a regional plan as well as the overall state plan. Plans need local, state and federal approval and will make communities eligible for pre-disaster mitigation funding. The report outlines actions that can be taken now to reduce the impact of natural disasters when and if they occur. The plan also reduces the region's vulnerability to natural disasters by effectively identifying appropriate projects for funding made available in the future.
- The Town's of Lunenburg, Lancaster, Townsend and Ashburnham were awarded \$1,183,249.00 in FY 07 Community Development Block Grant funds to conduct a 4-town regional housing rehab and housing counseling programs within each community.

**v) Westminster**

- A Natural Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan is close to completion for the community with assistance from MRPC. This plan is integrated with a regional plan as well as the overall state plan. Plans need local, state and federal approval and will make communities eligible for pre-disaster mitigation funding. The report outlines actions that can be taken now to reduce the impact of natural disasters when and if they occur. The plan also reduces the region's vulnerability to natural disasters by effectively identifying appropriate projects for funding made available in the future.
- At the May, 2008 Annual Town Meeting it was voted that the Town accept provisions of Chapter 43D of the MA General Laws as amended pursuant to Section 11 of Chapter 205 of the acts of 2006. The filing of a formal proposal with the Interagency Permitting Board is being initiated to gain approval for the designation of Priority Development Sites.

- The Town Received EOEEA approval of the Open Space and Recreation Plan (2007) until 2012. The Town also received Self-Help funding (\$186,000) for the Schenck Conservation land and approved \$60,000 funding for due diligence concerning the Southern Monadnock Plateau Forest Legacy Project and will submit a Self-Help application for funding in July 2008. Additionally, the Town closed on the Davis Road town-owned property with Habitat for Humanity, and prepared an Economic Development Study Committee Report 2007 ([http://www.westminster-ma.org/EDSC\\_report.pdf](http://www.westminster-ma.org/EDSC_report.pdf))

**w) Winchendon**

- A Natural Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan is near completion for the community with assistance from MRPC. This plan is integrated with a regional plan as well as the overall state plan. Plans need local, state and federal approval and will make communities eligible for pre-disaster mitigation funding. The report outlines actions that can be taken now to reduce the impact of natural disasters when and if they occur. The plan also reduces the region's vulnerability to natural disasters by effectively identifying appropriate projects for funding made available in the future.
- The Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan was updated in 2007-2008.

### **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 to the MEC, an affiliate of the MRPC, in an effort to identify affordable housing development sites in the region.

Four sites for affordable housing have been identified: two in the Town of Athol and another two in the City of Fitchburg. Additional discussions have taken place between MRPC staff and local officials in Athol, Ayer, Clinton, Fitchburg, Lancaster and Winchendon about identifying potential small-scale affordable housing project sites to assist the MRPC with its MRCEDS goal to “house the workforce”.

As of January 31, 2008 construction has commenced for affordable housing units located at Pequog Ave in Athol and First Street, Fitchburg. Housing planning and marketing efforts for these properties was initiated; An Affordable Housing Affirmative Marketing and Buyer Selection Plan, marketing materials, and applications were finalized.

Planning services in the area of financing and permitting have also been delivered in an effort to help local officials with the process of increasing the supply of affordable housing units in each community. These planning services will help house the workforce in an area where housing costs have skyrocketed.

### **Montachusett Region Brownfields Reuse Initiative (MRBRI)**

The MRPC was awarded Brownfields Site Assessment grants for \$200,000, \$150,000, \$200,000, and \$200,000 in 1998, 2001, 2004, and 2007 respectively. Another \$500,000 Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund grant was awarded to the MRPC in 2001.

### **The American Dream Down payment Initiative (ADDI)**

The American Dream Down payment Initiative (ADDI) is available to eligible first-time homebuyers in local communities. Montachusett Enterprise Center, Inc. (MEC) and Twin Cities Community Development Corporation (CDC) were awarded funds from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development to administer the ADDI program. From this program up to \$4,000 can be obtained for down payment and closing costs assistance. MEC was awarded \$200,000 in December of 2004 to assist income eligible participants in achieving the dream of homeownership. By the end of 2006, Community Development staff assisted 28 homeowners in purchasing their first home. Funds were used for down payment and closing costs through monies made available through a grant from the MA Department of Housing and Community Development. All 22 cities and towns within the Montachusett Region participated in this program. MEC was again awarded funding in December of 2006 to continue this program.

***Report on Foreclosures, Bankruptcies and Subprime Lending in the Montachusett Region***

The Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) and Jim Campen were contracted by the Twin Cities Community Development Corporation (CDC) on behalf of the North Central Massachusetts CRA Coalition to prepare a study on foreclosures, bankruptcies and subprime lending in the Montachusett Region. This \$8,000 grant was funded by Neighborworks America.

The study examined abusive lending practices and foreclosure starts in the Montachusett Region including: Ashby, Ayer, Athol, Ashburnham, Clinton, Fitchburg, Harvard, Hubbardston, Groton, Gardner, Lancaster, Lunenburg, Leominster, Petersham, Phillipston, Royalston, Shirley, Sterling Templeton, Townsend, Winchendon and Westminster. The study focused on foreclosure starts and subprime lending patterns.

## **X. EVALUATION AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

### **Evaluation of Activities by Non-MRPC Entities**

| <b>TASK</b>                                                                                                                                                            | <b>ACCOMPLISHMENT OF<br/>TASK BY DUE DATE =<br/>SUCCESS</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Provide staff support to newly created Montachusett Enterprise Center, Inc.                                                                                            | 8/2007 – 7/2009                                             |
| Assist Communities with the Completion of Massachusetts Commonwealth Capital Fund Program Documents and Grant Applications for Community Economic Development Funding. | 8/2007 – 7/2009                                             |
| Expand the MRBRI and Pursue Additional Brownfields Funding                                                                                                             | 8/2007 – 7/2009                                             |
| Manage the EDIP                                                                                                                                                        | 8/2007 – 7/2009                                             |
| Maintain the CEDS                                                                                                                                                      | 8/2007 – 7/2009                                             |

## XI. EDA CEDS GUIDELINES: 5. REQUIREMENTS

### 5. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The following reporting requirements apply only to EDDs and other EDA-funded planning organizations, in compliance with the requirements of **13 CFR, Part 303**. A copy of all **CEDS** documents should be sent to all appropriate state agencies for information. All **CEDS** documents, including the initial **CEDS**, **CEDS** annual reports, and revised **CEDS** must be available for review and comment by appropriate state and local government bodies, and local interest groups in the area covered.

#### A. Initial **CEDS** Document

Prior to EDA approval, the initial **CEDS** prepared by an EDD should be submitted for review and comment to the appropriate agency of the state or states in which the EDD is located, and the comments received, if any, included with the document.

#### B. Annual Report

After EDA has approved the initial **CEDS**, EDA-funded planning grantees are required to submit annual reports. The annual report documents the progress achieved on economic development activities regardless of the source of funding, and reports on changing economic conditions. The annual report should be a short document and readily accessible to the public and decision makers to use to keep track of the **CEDS** and its implementation. The annual report should:

- (1) **Adjust the **CEDS**** as needed. Adjustments to the strategy may be necessary during the course of the year to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities or address unexpected problems. These adjustments should be consistent with the overall strategy and must be documented in the next annual report. Any changes in the structure or composition of the Strategy Committee or staff should also be described in the annual report.
- (2) **Report** on the previous year's economic development activities and any significant changes in the region's economic conditions. A report of economic development activities undertaken in the previous year should be related to the needs identified in the strategy and to the objectives of the Act. Doing so will assist EDA and other Federal agencies in reporting the benefits resulting from the use of Federal funds.
- (3) **Evaluate** effectiveness in meeting goals. The report should contain an evaluation that measures effectiveness in meeting the goals of the strategy and the objectives of the Act. Performance measures should be identified to evaluate the progress of activities. EDA funded planning grantees should conduct annual evaluations of the performance of the **CEDS** process and include the results in the annual report submitted to EDA.
- (4) **Schedule** achievable goals for the coming year. A program of activities should be set out in a format similar to the action plan contained in the **CEDS** document. The details in the schedule of activities should be as definitive as possible and should set the baseline for reporting performance in the next annual report. The program of activities should also, as appropriate, be incorporated into the work program of EDA-funded planning grants.

#### C. Revised **CEDS**

A new, updated, or revised **CEDS** is required at least every five years, or sooner if EDA or the planning organization determines that the **CEDS** is inadequate due to changed circumstances. For example, the **CEDS** document can be amended to accommodate unforeseen changes caused by natural disasters, major economic adjustments, or rapid changes in national priorities. Any part of the **CEDS** document, including the program projections, development strategies, or plans for implementation, may be changed upon resolution of the area Strategy Committee, and concurrence of EDA.

Source: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Guidelines, June 1, 1999

## XII. EDA CEDS GUIDELINES: 6. EDA’S ROLE

### 6. EDA’S ROLE

The primary points of contact between the organization responsible for preparing the CEDS and EDA are the Economic Development Representatives (EDRs) or the regional office staff person assigned responsibility for the state, as well as the regional planning staff. Their role is to:

- Provide general technical assistance and advice.
- Provide general advice to the economic development organization on the best use of EDA and other Federal sources and expertise.
- Provide specific advice on which projects might be considered for EDA funding.
- Facilitate EDA approval of the CEDS and annual reports.
- Help identify other Federal programs that might be used to implement portions of CEDS.
- Help the planning organization address multiple Federal planning requirements.
- Assist the planning organization to use the resources of state governments, where appropriate.
- The EDR and other regional staff may be particularly valuable in explaining environmental, civil rights, historic preservation, project notification and review, and other Federal requirements effectively and efficiently to minimize duplication among Federal programs.
- Economic development organizations are encouraged to work with and make use of other EDA programs such as University Centers, Local Technical Assistance, Trade Adjustment Assistance Centers, Economic Adjustment Assistance, and State Planning Assistance. EDA regional offices and EDRs can provide current information on accessing these programs.

### B. EDA Approval

When an initial CEDS document, an annual CEDS report, or a CEDS update is completed, one copy of the document must be sent to the EDR or the regional staff person assigned responsibility for the state, and one copy to the regional office. A copy of the CEDS document should also be submitted to the governor or the appropriate state agency for review and comment. An attachment should be submitted to EDA listing local agencies that received a copy of the document for review and including their comments.

The document will be reviewed by the EDA regional office and the EDR. If the document is acceptable, the Regional Director will notify the area in writing within 60 days that the CEDS has been approved. If the document is unacceptable, the Regional Director will provide written comments within 60 days to the chairperson of the Strategy Committee, identifying the deficiencies and allowing additional time to correct them. Assistance in revising the document may be requested from EDA.

EDA approval is based on the following criteria:

- **Quality.** The CEDS document must respond to an area's development potential and problems and propose reasonable strategies and actions. It should also demonstrate that the CEDS process has been followed and that it involves broad participation of stakeholders in the area's economy.
- **Priorities.** The CEDS document must give priority consideration to the area's economically distressed population. The document should analyze the nature and causes of distress and adopt strategies, goals, and objectives specifically designed to reduce distress in those areas.
- **Local Initiative.** The CEDS document must identify local actions, (procedural, regulatory, and financial), that can be undertaken with little or no outside reliance on Federal financial assistance.
- **Regulatory Requirements.** The CEDS documents must demonstrate how EDA requirements and Federal regulations will be met (13 CFR Chapter III). Of particular importance are civil rights and environmental laws and regulations. Sufficient details should be provided to demonstrate compliance with all applicable civil rights requirements, directives, and regulations. The document should contain adequate environmental information and analysis to identify potential environmentally sensitive sites and issues in the region that would preclude development. The actions and projects proposed should take into account sound principles of sustainable development and smart growth.

Source: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Guidelines, June 1, 1999

**XIII. APPENDICES**

#### **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>

***B. 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.

### ***C. APPENDIX C: MASSACHUSETTS MASTER PLAN STATUTE***

By state statute, municipal planning boards are required to create “master plans” also referred to as “comprehensive plans” on a regular basis (MGL Chapter 41, Section 81D). There are nine elements in a comprehensive plan. They are:

- (1) Goals and policies statement which identifies the goals and policies of the municipality for its future growth and development. Each community shall conduct an interactive public process, to determine community values, goals and to identify patterns of development that will be consistent with these goals.
- (2) Land use plan element which identifies present land use and designates the proposed distribution, location and inter-relationship of public and private land uses. This element shall relate the proposed standards of population density and building intensity to the capacity of land available or planned facilities and services. A land use plan map illustrating the land use policies of the municipality shall be included.
- (3) Housing element which identifies and analyzes existing and forecasted housing needs and objectives including programs for the preservation, improvement and development of housing. This element shall identify policies and strategies to provide a balance of local housing opportunities for all citizens.
- (4) Economic development element which identifies policies and strategies for the expansion or stabilization of the local economic base and the promotion of employment opportunities.
- (5) Natural and cultural resources element which provides an inventory of the significant natural, cultural and historic resource areas of the municipality, and policies and strategies for the protection and management of such areas.
- (6) Open space and recreation element which provides an inventory of recreational and resources and open space areas of the municipality, and policies and strategies for the management and protection of such resources and areas.
- (7) Services and facilities element which identifies and analyzes existing and forecasted needs for facilities and services used by the public.
- (8) Circulation element which provides an inventory of existing and proposed circulation and transportation systems.
- (9) Implementation program element which defines and schedules the specific municipal actions necessary to achieve the objectives of each element of the master or study plan. Scheduled expansion or replacement of public facilities or circulation system components and the anticipated costs and revenues associated with accomplishment of such activities shall be detailed in this element. This element shall specify the process by which the

municipality's regulatory structures shall be amended so as to be consistent with the master plan.

***D. APPENDIX D: MONTACHUSETT REGION COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGY COMMITTEE***

Clinton Town Clerk  
242 Church Street  
Clinton, MA 01510

Fitchburg City Clerk  
718 Main Street  
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Planning Board  
Town of Ashburnham  
32 Main Street, Town Hall  
Ashburnham, MA 01430

Planning Board  
Town of Athol  
c/o 49 Glen Street  
Athol, MA 01331

Permitting Authority  
33 Andrews Parkway  
Devens, MA 01434

Planning Board / Planning Director  
Town of Lancaster  
Town Hall - P.O. Box 428  
Lancaster, MA 01523

Planning Board  
Town of Petersham  
P.O. Box 486  
Petersham, MA 01366

Board of Selectmen  
584 Main Street, Town Hall  
Athol, MA 01331

Linda Sanders, Town Administrator  
Town of Ashby  
895 Main Street, Town Hall  
Ashby, MA 01431

Board of Selectmen  
P.O. Box 135, Town Hall  
Lunenburg, MA 01462

Michael Ward, Admin. Assistant  
Town of Clinton  
242 Church Street, Town Hall  
Clinton, MA 01510

Helen Divoll, Admin. Assistant  
Town of Royalston  
The Common, Town Hall  
Royalston, MA 01368

Bonnie Biocchi  
Mass Development  
717 Lowell Road  
Groton, MA 01450

Fitchburg Airport Commission  
52 Juniper Road  
Fitchburg, MA 01420

David Rowlands  
Ward 1 Councilor  
49 Braeburn Circle  
Leominster, MA 01453

Mall At Whitney Field  
100 Commercial Road  
Leominster, MA 01453

Paul Hale  
81B Ragged Hill Road  
Hubbardston, MA 01452

Amalgamated Transit Union  
87 Carey Street  
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Jesus M. Cruz  
Councilor-at-Large  
154 Williams Road  
Fitchburg, MA 01420

John Dombrowski  
Councilor-at-Large  
3098 Legate Hill Road  
Leominster, MA 01453

E. Thomas Donnelly  
Councilor-at-Large  
149 Prospect Street  
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Virginia Tocci  
Councilor-at-Large  
334 Hill Street  
Leominster, MA 01453

Wayne Nickel  
Ward 2 Councilor  
182 Fifth Street  
Leominster, MA 01453

Robert Salvatelli  
Ward 4 Councilor  
11 Woodside Ave.  
Leominster, MA 01453

Dennis Rosa  
Councilor-at-Large  
109 Country Lane  
Leominster, MA 01453

Richard Marchand  
Ward 5 Councilor  
224 Merriam Ave.  
Leominster, MA 01453

James Lanciani, Jr.  
Councilor-at-Large  
156 Sylvan Ave.  
Leominster, MA 01453

Claire Freda  
Ward 3 Councilor  
117 Debbie Dr.  
Leominster, MA 01453

James Minns  
Ward 4 Councilor  
88 Maple Street  
Gardner, MA 01440

Joshua Cormier  
Councilor-at-Large  
60 Temple St.  
Gardner, MA 01440

Charles LeBlanc  
Ward 2 Councilor  
202 Leo Drive  
Gardner, MA 01440

Alice Anderson  
Councilor-at-Large  
34 Chapman Park  
Gardner, MA 01440

Ronald Cormier  
Councilor-at-Large  
55 Wickman Dr.  
Gardner, MA 01440

Atty. Scott Graves  
Councilor-at-Large  
33 Pleasant Street  
Gardner, MA 01440

Cleo Monette  
Councilor-at-Large  
256 Baker Street  
Gardner, MA 01440

Roger Jaillet  
Ward 3 Councilor  
35 Wickman Dr.  
Gardner, MA 01440

Neil Janssens  
Ward 1 Councilor/President  
18 Westford Street  
Gardner, MA 01440

Dean Tran  
Councilor-at-Large  
44 Tibbett Circle  
Fitchburg, MA 01420

James Robinson  
Ward 5 Councilor  
31 Lovewell Street  
Gardner, MA 01440

Kim Dembrosky  
Councilor-at-Large  
198 Century Way  
Gardner, MA 01440

Ted DeSalvatore  
Ward 4 Councilor  
28 Essex Street  
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Annie DeMartino  
Councilor-at-Large  
16 Harrison Ave.  
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Thomas Conry, Jr.  
Councilor-at-Large  
55 Jeffrey Keating Road  
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Jody Joseph  
Ward 6 Councilor  
20 Tilton Street  
Fitchburg, MA 01420

David Clark  
Ward 1 Councilor  
39 Seneca Street  
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Norman Boisvert  
Ward 2 Councilor  
187 Franklin road  
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Joel Kaddy  
Ward 3 Councilor  
57 Highview Street  
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Stephan Hay  
Ward 5 Councilor  
30 Shawna Street  
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce  
100 Sherman Ave. Suite 3  
Devens, MA 01434

North Quabbin Chamber of Commerce  
P.O. Box 157 / 512 Main Street  
Athol, MA 01331

The Community Journal  
P.O. Box 57  
Ashburnham, MA 01430

|                                                                                                      |                                                                                       |                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Item<br>156 Church Street<br>Clinton, MA 01510                                                   | Mr. Jim Donohue<br>P.J. Keating<br>998 Reservoir Road<br>Lunenburg, MA 01462          | Lunenburg Ledger<br>603 Massachusetts Ave.<br>Lunenburg, MA 01462                            |
| WEIM<br>762 Water Street<br>Fitchburg, MA 01420                                                      | Times & Courier<br>P.O. Box 149<br>Clinton, MA 01510                                  | The Landmark<br>P.O. Box 546<br>Holden, MA 01510                                             |
| Senator John Kerry<br>One Bowdoin Square<br>Tenth Floor<br>Boston, MA 02114                          | Cleghorn Neighborhood Center<br>85 Fairmont Street<br>Fitchburg, MA 01420             | Dr. Robert Antonucci<br>Fitchburg State College<br>160 Pearl Street<br>Fitchburg, MA 01420   |
| Senator Edward Kennedy<br>2400 JFK Building<br>Boston, MA 02203                                      | Fitchburg Industrial Development Commission<br>718 Main Street<br>Fitchburg, MA 01420 | Congressman Martin Meehan<br>Lowell District Office<br>11 Kearney Square<br>Lowell, MA 01852 |
| MA Rehab Commission<br>76 Summer St. Rm 330<br>Fitchburg, MA 01420                                   | Stephanie Matthews d/b/a<br>Absolutransit<br>178 Temple Street<br>Gardner, MA 01440   | Spanish American Center<br>112 Spruce Street<br>Leominster, MA 01453                         |
| Department of Conservation and Recreation<br>251 Causeway Street, Suite 600<br>Boston, MA 02114-2104 | Alliance Transportation, Inc.<br>59 Pond Street, Suite B<br>Sharon, MA 02067          | Fitchburg Spanish Council Inc.<br>24 Third Street<br>Fitchburg, MA 01420                     |
| Greater Gardner CDC<br>8 Parker Street<br>Gardner, MA 01440                                          | Care-A-Van Transport, Inc.<br>130 Woodland Street<br>Fitchburg, MA 01420              | City Cab Company, Inc.<br>17 Snow Street<br>Fitchburg, MA 01420                              |
| Classic Of Leominster, Inc<br>83 Mechanic Street<br>Leominster, MA 01453                             | Community Transit Services, Inc.<br>573 South Street<br>Athol, MA 01331               | Donahue Limousine Service Inc.<br>P.O. Box 947<br>137 Leominster, MA 01453                   |
| Need a Lift Medivan, Inc.<br>132 Crawford Street<br>Leominster, MA 01453                             | Smiley's Taxi<br>301 Central Street<br>Gardner, MA 01440                              | Woods Ambulance, Inc.<br>457 Main Street<br>Gardner, MA 01440                                |

Lancaster Times  
P.O. Box 149  
Clinton, MA 01510

Winchendon C.A.C., Inc.  
273 Central Street  
Winchendon, MA 01475

Winchendon Town Cab  
113 Central Street  
Winchendon, MA 01475

Wilson Bus Lines  
P.O. Box 415  
E. Templeton, MA 01438

Linda Vandegrift, Chairman  
Traffic Study Commission  
2493 Main St

Ed Gokey  
Gokey & Quinn Bus Co, Inc.  
P.O. Box 777  
Harvard, MA 01455

Robert Lowe  
Clinton Rd  
Sterling, MA 01564

Joyce Aucoin  
South Fitchburg Neighborhood Assoc.  
15 Duck Mill Rd  
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Robert Trainque  
Heritage Truck & Transit  
750 West Broadway  
Gardner, MA 01440

George St. Germaine  
41 Fox Street  
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Bonnie Biocchi  
MassDevelopment  
33 Andrew Parkway #207  
Devens, MA 01434-5604

Gerald White  
25 Baptist Common Road  
Templeton, MA 01468

Ralph Henshaw  
79 S. Road P.O. Box 186  
Templeton, MA 01468

City of Gardner  
Mayor's Office  
95 Pleasant Street, Room 125  
Gardner, MA 01440

Clinton Hospital, UMass Memorial  
201 Highland Street  
Clinton, MA 01510

Astrid Glynn  
Parcab  
57 Cedar St  
Clinton, MA 01510

City of Fitchburg  
Mayor's Office  
718 Main Street, City Hall  
Fitchburg, MA 01420

HealthAlliance, Inc  
Burbank Campus  
275 Nichols Road  
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Diversified VNA  
25 Tucker Road  
Leominster, MA 01453

Athol Memorial Hospital  
2033 Main Street  
Athol, MA 01331

Congressman John W. Olver  
463 Main Street  
Fitchburg, MA 01420

David Huhtala  
Huhtala Oil Co.  
427 Dudley RD.  
Templeton, MA 01468

RCAP Solutions, Inc.  
205 School Street  
Gardner, MA 01440

Roy Gilbert  
Gilbert Furniture  
28 Front Street  
Winchendon, MA 01475

Mary Krapf  
1023 Piper Road  
Ashby, MA 01431

Carlton Nichols  
Nichols & Stone  
232 Sherman Street  
Gardner, MA 01440

Hemendrah Shah, President  
Spectro Coating Corp.  
101 Scott Drive  
Leominster, MA 01453

IMA Nova, President/CEO  
7 New Lancaster Road  
Leominster, MA USA 01453

George Jones III  
Seaman Paper Company of Massachusetts, Inc.  
51 Main Street  
Otter River, MA 01436

**E. APPENDIX E: EIGHT INVESTMENT PRIORITIES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
ADMINISTRATION**

Please show how the investment will meet the EDA Investment Priorities that include evaluating proposals on current statutory and regulatory requirements including consideration of whether the proposed investment.

*1. The proposed investments are market-based. The investment should capitalize on the community's unique regional assets and strengths to build comparative advantages for future business investment.*

Unique Regional Assets. The Montachusett Region contains a “satellite” economy, one that is dependent upon the businesses, institutions and people within the region, but relates to other metropolitan areas in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Located 35-85 miles west of Boston, its manufacturing cluster (employing more people than the state and national averages) enables people to earn near to living wages or above. The area’s economy is relatively diversified beyond its high incidence of manufacturers in the region. Non-direct economic assets include the amount of natural resources available for recreation such as state parks. Also, according to a recent study by the Department of Agriculture, the Montachusett Region is the least developed region in eastern and central Massachusetts. Commuting to the metropolitan Boston and Worcester areas is done by many residents. However, most residents choose to work within the Montachusett region. While there are some development pressures affecting virtually every community in the region, there is greater development to the east and the south of the region. We are fortunate to have a balance, thus far, between the need for land to be developed and land to be preserved, maintaining a higher quality of life than can be found to our east and south.

Strengths of the Montachusett Region. Our primary resource and strength is our people. In so many cases they are well-trained in sciences, engineering and mathematics producing high quality products known world-wide for more than a century. Our proximity to institutions of higher learning within the region and within an hour’s commute allows people to further their education. Having a cluster of manufacturers (polymers, metals, paper, wood and food processing) supported by the finance, insurance, real estate and related services industry provides stability for the regional economy. An emerging focus on environmental protection and eco-tourism (i.e. Johnny Appleseed Trail Association and Visitors Center) are helping to offset our dependence upon manufacturing, raising the awareness of and selling power of non-manufacturers, and providing entry level jobs, training a young workforce, in the accommodations, retail and services sectors. Recreation amenities such as skiing and hiking abound at Mount Wachusett, Mount Watatic, Mount Tully and Mount Monadnock, while an increase in fishing and boating can be seen in the Nashua, Millers and Chicopee Rivers watersheds enhancing residents’ quality of lives.

Advantages of the Region. Our region has the advantage of being in a location in Massachusetts where high paying jobs can be found in the manufacturing industry and the natural amenities abound enhancing our personal time spent with family and friends.

- While pockets of poverty persist in the western Montachusett Region, the region is blessed with both major interstate (I-190) and state (2, 12, 13, 101, 202) routes providing easy access to the I-90 system connecting Boston, Massachusetts to Seattle, Washington and New York City. We have easy access to international and regional airports in Boston and Hartford (international) and Manchester, NH, Worcester, MA and Providence, RI (regional).
- A strong educational system exists within the region. Residents have access to two year, four year and graduate degree programs at Atlantic Union College, Fitchburg State College and Mount Wachusett Community College. An “educational collaborative” exists between local industry and local educational institutions, providing an educational path so that high school students may build upon their local technical school educations at the two year and four year school level should they wish to remain in the polymers and metals industries, that are so prevalent in the region. This effort has been leveraged by the work of a local community development corporation using grant funds to train workers for the polymers industry.
- Beauty abounds in the region drawing in “day trippers” who visit tourist destination points along the “Johnny Appleseed Trail” and who may use trails in the woods for equestrian, hiking and all terrain vehicle uses, state parks for camping, mountains for hiking, and our lakes and rivers for boating, canoeing and kayaking. These “eco-tourism” activities help to diversify the regional economy lessening the dependence upon the manufacturers and educational institutions, two of our largest employment sectors within the region.

2. The proposed investments are proactive in nature and scope. The investment should support and advance innovation and increased productivity. It should enhance a community’s success in achieving high and rising standard of living. Prosperity depends upon the productivity with which the U.S. economy uses labor and capital to produce goods and services. Productivity rises because of innovation. Moreover, sustained economic growth will require continued innovation at all levels of the U.S. economy, especially as we enter a new era when the workforce will be increasing more slowly.

Proposed investments are proactive advance innovation and increased productivity

Investing funds within the MRPC enables it to coordinate training of local officials, enables MRPC staff to access funding for job training entities, downtown redevelopment organizations and municipalities and address the goals and objectives contained within the Montachusett Region CEDS.

- Training local officials increases their ability to access resources for their communities so that they will be able to achieve a more sustainable community.
- MRPC staff’s efforts working with local community development corporations to access funds to train workers in the “Worklinks” program provides direct training residents enhancing their skills so that they are more likely to be employed by the plastics manufacturing companies. These efforts to train workers have been fruitful as the regional manufacturing industry has identified a lack of qualified candidates for more than five years.
- Our sponsorship of the Fitchburg Redevelopment Authority’s efforts to redevelop the former GE, now Putnam Place site have yielded results. The FRA is now attracting and locating new firms to the facility.

- MRPC's management of federal grant funds (Community Development Block Grant {CDBG} program) improving signs, awnings and facades in downtown Athol has eliminated blighting influences and enhanced the aesthetics of Main Street in Athol. These investments provide a more stable downtown as visitation to retailers and service providers increases, stabilizing the working environment for the employees in the downtown.

3. The proposed investments look beyond the immediate economic horizon, anticipate economic changes, and diversify the local and regional economy. The investment should be part of an overarching, long-term regional strategy that includes expanding industry clusters and developing emerging, new clusters. Investments should create the conditions for sustained productivity.

- The enhanced MRCEDS includes a new objective that "technology-led" businesses should be encouraged to develop, complementing the polymers, metals, paper, wood and food processing industry cluster in the region.
- The goal of diversifying the regional economy in the area of increasing non-manufacturing businesses is being achieved. Tourism-related businesses are reporting up to 30% increases in business since they have joined the Johnny Appleseed Trail Association, Inc., an entity promoting tourism in the region. The increase in tourism helps to diversify the regional economy and lessen our dependence upon the manufacturing sector.
- MRPC and the MRCEDS's support of the business development at Devens draws new firms into the Montachusett Region. The inclusion of polymers, paper food processing, distribution and machinery manufacturers strengthens existing clusters, while the location of a software developer helps to diversify the regional economy and increases job opportunities for residents in the region.

4. The proposed investments maximize the attraction of private sector investment and would not otherwise come to fruition absent EDA's investment. EDA should serve as a unique public sector source of "venture capital" to assist distressed communities that otherwise would be at a distinct competitive disadvantage in attracting the higher levels of private capital investment in facilities and equipment that drives the creation of higher-skill, higher-wage jobs.

Funding MRPC's continued planning efforts assist with projects as different as the conversion of a former army base to a business center, the redevelopment of downtowns where office vacancy rates can range from 5% to 25% to promoting industrial park planning and promoting "corridor development" of State Route 2.

- Support of MassDevelopment's conversion of Devens into a business center has produced approximately 4,000 jobs to date.
- Downtown redevelopment training, Sign, Awning and Façade program management in Athol, and support of Fitchburg's redevelopment of Putnam Place are helping to revitalize the downtowns. One result is the location of high-tech businesses such as an engineering firm that located at Putnam Place.
- Most of the industrial park land in the region is at or near build out. There is a lack of a region-wide, concerted effort to constantly plan ahead for the development of new industrial parks. Municipalities typically start planning the development of their new industrial park

after the existing space has been filled. In addition, most of the land available for industrial parks development is located within communities (towns) that lack the professional staff to plan and development such sites. It is critically important for the MRPC economic development staff to continue the efforts begun in Templeton in August 2001, to educate local officials about how to development land. These efforts will increase especially in the communities that have requested such assistance (Athol, Lancaster, Templeton and Westminster).

**The lack of a staff-supported effort to coordinate and implement these objectives will contribute to the lack of available space for industry to grow in the Montachusett region, minimizing the potential for people to earn higher wages in highly skilled professions.**

5. The proposed investments have a high probability of success and include: A. The investment should have a high level of local, state and private matching funds. EDA funds are limited and should be highly leveraged with matching funds to the greatest extent possible. A larger local, private match indicates a higher level of commitment to successful completion by the public sector and higher market-based credibility by the private sector.; B. High degree of commitment of local political capital by elected officials; C. High level of commitment of human resources talent to project outcomes.

- The MRPC is matching the EDA grant funds on a 1:1 basis with cash and in-kind services.
- The Mayor of the City of Leominster serves as the Chairman of the MRCEDS Committee. All three of the cities' mayors serve as members of the MEDD. The Mayor of the City of Fitchburg serves as the Chairman of the MEDD. In addition, at least three members of Boards of Selectmen from towns in the region also serve on the MEDD Board of Directors.
- Human resource talents have been tapped on each, relevant committee (representing over 65 persons) and all community and economic development professionals (representing at least seven professional staff) within the region.

6. Results in an environment where higher paying, lucrative jobs are created.

The results are apparent and will continue. The location of software development firms to Devens, hiring of chemists at polymers companies, the continued demand for engineers and draftspersons at metals fabrications shops and the emergence of a new engineering firm in Downtown Fitchburg working on Federal Department of Defense contracts are practical examples of the types of jobs available and initiative taken by people in the Montachusett Region.

7. Maximizes return on taxpayer investment.

The investment in the MRPC generates a delivery of services to municipalities that result in direct benefits to businesses so that they may remain, grow and relocate and expand within the region. This relationship can be seen in Athol, for example, where management of a downtown improvements program provided the commercial space that a local manufacturer needed to expand its retail operations, creating ten new jobs in 2001. Coordinating the MRCEDS process, and including and supporting infrastructure development at Devens, reuse of Putnam Place in Fitchburg, expansion of the Montachusett Industrial Park in Fitchburg and creating the Summit Industrial Park in Gardner have all led to the expansion of local firms and the hiring of additional workers.

#### 8. Cluster research, report and development.

The Montachusett Region has an easily identifiable and viable cluster of businesses concentrated in manufacturing similar products such as polymers, metals, paper, wood and food processing. These manufacturers are supported by finance, insurance and real estate servicing their needs. The percentage of regional residents employed in education is almost equal to the percentage employed in the state in the same area. We are linked closely to the state's educational cluster. Many of the educational institutions and curricula are linked to providing training to potential end existing employees in the polymers and metals clusters.

Further analysis and identification of all of the elements that make up this cluster is warranted. This task shall be accomplished within one year.

***F. APPENDIX F: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES***