

# FY11 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

## Town of Deerfield

### Introduction

This Community Development Strategy summarizes the Town of Deerfield's relevant planning processes, identifies the Town's most significant community development goals, and relates them to the Commonwealth's sustainable development principles. The identified goals will shape the Town's future community development efforts with investment of federal, state and local resources. These goals are consistent with the priorities and needs identified through several local and regional community assessment and strategic planning processes.

### Community Planning Entities

Town residents contribute to a variety of coordinated local and regional planning efforts. Needs assessments and strategic planning activities are conducted and/or facilitated by the Select Board/Board of Health, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Energy Resources Committee, Open Space Committee, Oxford Reuse Committee, Agricultural Commission, and other Town Boards and Committees. Various Town officials are also involved in needs identification and goal setting. A total of 193 residents volunteer for these boards and committees.

The Town is assisted in its planning and community development efforts by several regional organizations including the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG), Franklin Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (FRHRA) and other contracted experts.

The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the Department of Energy Resources (DOER), the Department of Public Health (DPH), Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA), American Farmland Trust, Franklin Land Trust, and other state agencies and non-profits also assist the Town, providing guidance and funding to help meet community needs and goals.

### Planning Processes and Documents

Plans, processes, and documents that have informed this Community Development Strategy include, but are not limited to:

*Green Community Action Plan:* This Plan was completed in 2010 and outlines the steps the Town would like to take in order to become designated a Green Community.

*Open Space and Recreation Plan:* The Town adopted an Open Space and Recreation Plan in 2006, which looks to increase protection of the Town's wetlands and groundwater, preserve land along the Pocumtuck Ridge, and other actions related to farmland, wildlife, and water protection.

*Community Development Plan (CDP):* Deerfield's Community Development Plan, created under Executive Order 418, was completed in June 2004.

*Master Plan:* The Deerfield Master Plan was completed in April 2000. It recommendations include: preserving farmland, creating senior housing, examining expansion of the business district, and more.

*Application of Traffic Calming in South Deerfield:* This plan was completed in 2001 and looked at ways to slow traffic and increase pedestrian safety in the South Deerfield Center.

*Annual Town Report:* The Town of Deerfield produces an Annual Report each year which contains reports from various Town boards, committees, commissions and departments. These reports detail information about town processes, highlight progress made on a number of community development and planning projects, and identify needs and priorities related to town governance, community development, health and human services, and public safety.

Regional Plans/Programs: The Town's priorities were taken into consideration during the development of the following regional plans:

- *Deerfield River Watershed Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2004.* This plan was approved through to 2014 by the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services and was considered their most comprehensive watershed plan to date. The Plan explores key issues, concerns, goals, and objectives dealing with forests and farmland, environmental problems, scenic views, cultural resources, and the threats to these resources posed by development and inadequate land use planning. It includes proposed solutions in a Ten-Year Action Plan.
- *An Inventory and Analysis of Industrial Park Properties in Franklin County, 2003.* This report looked at undeveloped and developed industrial land in the County, including Deerfield, and identified potential new development and redevelopment opportunities.
- *The Greater Franklin County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2007 Annual Report:* The CEDS program is operated by the FRCOG and guides economic development activities throughout Franklin County and neighboring communities. The program is directed by a committee of 45 business and community leaders.
- *Regional Transportation Plan, 2007:* This plan, coordinated by the FRCOG with input from all 26 towns, promotes ways to develop transportation alternatives to the automobile, while at the same time supporting the improvement and more efficient use of traditional facilities.
- *South County Senior Center:* The town is a partner in a regional senior center with the towns of Sunderland and Whately, providing a meals site, social and recreational programs and outreach to seniors in the three towns.
- *Franklin Regional Counsel of Governments Regional Public Health Nursing:* Participation in this program provides the town with eight hours of Master's level nurses time on a weekly basis.
- *Franklin County Regional Water Supply Study, 2003.* This study assesses the short and long-term capacity of 17 community water supplies to support growth in the region and provides a region-wide context for water conservation. Produced by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments with funding from MA EOE. A.
- *Brownfields Program:* The FRCOG administers two Brownfields programs on behalf of the region - a site assessment program, and a revolving loan fund program for clean up. The site assessment program uses funds from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to hire an engineering firm to complete environmental site assessments for identified properties. The Brownfields Clean-up Revolving Loan Fund was created by a \$1 million grant from the EPA to the FRCOG in 1999. This fund gives low-interest loans or sub-grants to eligible entities cleaning up brownfield sites. Deerfield has participated in both of these programs and continues to do so.

- *Franklin County Regional Solid Waste District:* The District assists the town in contracting for disposal of trash, managing a recycling program, licensing its transfer station and a hazardous materials mitigation program.

#### Consistency with Sustainable Development Principles

The Town of Deerfield is committed to all of the principles of sustainable development. The Town's activities, policies, and programs are consistent with these principles, including the following:

*Advance Equity:* Deerfield has participated in the FRCOG Brownfield Program in order to assess and cleanup sites located in low to moderate income areas in the Town. The goals of this work have been to remove the sources of blight and improve property values.

*Make Efficient Decisions:* Deerfield has created a MGL Ch. 43D Priority Development Site at the Oxford Food Site. Sites which are designated as such must have an expedited application and permitting process under which the timeframe for permitting shall not exceed one year from the date of initial application to the date of final approval.

*Protect Land and Ecosystems:* The Town of Deerfield has some of the richest agricultural soils in the Commonwealth and works hard to protect it. Over the last five years, with the help of the Deerfield and Franklin Land Trusts, it has purchased 119.6 acres of Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APR's) on working farms in the Town. Currently, there are pending APR's for an additional 153 acres of farmland that are also located along the Connecticut and Deerfield Rivers.

*Expand Housing Opportunities:* The Town has allocated funds to the Franklin Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority to perform a feasibility study for an affordable senior housing facility on town-owned land.

*Increase Job and Business Opportunities:* The Town has recently revised its commercial and industrial zoning districts to support business growth in its town center, focusing especially on small businesses.

*Promote Clean Energy:* Deerfield has just completed an Action Plan that lays out the steps the Town needs to take to become designated a Green Community. This involves reducing the Town's energy use by 20% over the next 5 years, adopting the energy-efficient Stretch Building Code, among other tasks. The town received EECBG funding to make energy conservation improvements to its public buildings, including the school. The town is also exploring, in cooperation with the regional solid waste district, the use of its capped landfill as a solar energy site.

*Provide Transportation Choice:* The Town has completed a Traffic Calming Study that recommends strategies to promote pedestrian safety and activity in the South Deerfield center. The Town has also recently received several bicycle racks and is part of the Franklin County Bikeway network.

## Resources

Deerfield will address its community needs and priorities using a variety of local, regional, state, and national resources including:

- Local property taxes
- State aid through school programs, lottery funds, library programs, and special status exemption funds
- Technical assistance and grants from regional organizations including the FRCOG, Franklin County Community Development Corporation, Franklin Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority, and Franklin County Solid Waste Management District Federal, and state highway and other transportation programs
- State grant and loan funding through the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, and other state agencies
- Federal grant and loan funding through the US Department of Agriculture, US Department of Housing and Community Development, Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Highway Scenic Ways program, and other federal agencies
- Private foundations
- Volunteer labor and donated materials
- Community fundraising activities

## Strategic Action Plan

The planning processes described above have resulted in specific goals and recommendations that the Town will undertake in the next 3-5 years. Priorities, projects, and resources are described in the relevant planning documents. The following Priority Project List describes some of the Town's specific goals and the methods to meet them.

<b>Community Development Strategic Action Plan – Priority Project List</b>					
<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Funding Sources</b>
1	2010	Town wide	Housing Rehabilitation	Provide resources to assist low and moderate income residents to improve conditions in existing housing.	CDBG funds
1	2010	Town wide	Senior Service Needs Study	Conduct a comprehensive assessment of seniors service needs for Deerfield, Whately and Sunderland, assess the adequacy of the current senior center in terms of space and services.	CDBG funds
1	Ongoing	Town wide	Protect farmland	Purchase APR's for the protection of prime farmland in Town along the Connecticut and Deerfield Rivers.	APR funds, Town funds
1	2011	Town wide	Home Weatherization	Provide funds to assist seniors, and low and moderate income residents to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.	Green Communities Act, State funds
1	2011	Town wide	Pavement Management Study	Perform a pavement management study for federal aid eligible roads in town.	Federal funds
1	2011	Town wide	Revise Zoning	Create a Solar Overlay district to allow as-of-right zoning for solar PV systems in selected locations.	Green Communities Act, town funds
1	2012	Town wide	Scenic Byway	Complete Corridor Management Plan for the Route 116 Scenic Byway.	Federal funds
1	2011-2015	Town wide	Energy conservation and efficiency	Implement Green Community Energy Reduction Plan to reduce energy use by 20% from baseline.	Green Communities Act, town funds; EECBG funding

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1	2012	Town center	Streetscape	Implement streetscape design for South Deerfield Town Center.	State funds, Federal Scenic Byway funds
1	2015	Town center	Senior Housing	Construct senior housing on town-owned site, as a follow up to housing needs study	Town funds, State funds
1	Ongoing	Town wide	Social services	Implement an Aging in Place program, which would provide resources for seniors to allow them to remain in their homes as they age.	Town funds, State funds
1	Ongoing	Town wide	Open Space Connection	Connect current open space areas to create continuous wildlife corridors.	APR funds, Town funds, private funds
1	Ongoing	Town Wide	Land Protection	Protect certain land for conservation, recreation, forestry, and agricultural purposes.	APR funds, Town funds, Private funds, Federal Scenic Byway funds
2	2010	Town wide	Solar Power	Develop Town landfill for a large-scale ground-mounted solar PV system.	Private investment
2	2014	Town Forest	Forest Management Plan	Create a forest management plan for Town Forest outlining potential hiking trails and wildlife habitat.	Town funds, State funds
2	2014	Town Wide	Revise Zoning	Explore the adoption of zoning measures, like a ridge protection bylaw, that would seek to protect the slopes of the Pocumtuck Ridge and the “Hills of Wisdom.”	Town funds, State funds
2	2015	Town wide	Social Services	Provide social service programs for job training, job-related transportation assistance, elder self-sufficiency, and services for persons with disabilities.	CDBG funds, State funds, Town funds

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3	2015	Town wide	Revise Zoning	Revise zoning districts along Rt. 5/10 corridor so that it more closely matches existing land uses.	Town funds, State funds

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