

Town of Erving Community Development Strategy

Overview

Volunteers and paid staff serving as elected or appointed members of various boards and committees undertake Erving's governance, community development, and strategic planning efforts. The activities contained within this application for funding are consistent with the priorities and needs identified through several local and regional community assessment and strategic planning processes. This Community Development Strategy will be reviewed and discussed at a public meeting held on 11-24-14. It was discussed and refined at Select Board meetings on 11-10-14 and on 11-17-14. It was formally adopted, along with the principles of sustainable development, by the Board of Selectmen on 12-8-14.

Community Planning Entities

Town residents are involved in a variety of local and regional planning efforts to help clarify and coordinate the town's priorities. Needs assessments and community-based planning activities are conducted by the Board of Selectmen, Administrative Coordinator, Board of Assessors, Board of Health, Council on Aging, Finance Committee, Fire, Police and Highway Departments, Library Trustees, Planning Board, Recreation Commission, Treasurer, Town Accountant, Town Clerk, and School Committees. Various ad-hoc and sub-committees working under these municipal boards are also involved in needs identification and goal setting. The Town is assisted in its planning and community development efforts by several regional organizations including the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG), Franklin Community Development Corporation (FCDC), and the Franklin Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (FRHRDA). Franklin County Home Care Corporation/Area Agency on Aging (FCHCC) is a private, non-profit corporation, which develops, provides, and coordinates a range of services to support the independent living of elders, people with disabilities, caregivers and providing support to local Councils on Aging and Senior Centers. They serve elders, persons with disabilities and care providers in homes in all of Franklin County.

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) and the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) also assist the Town, providing guidance and funding to help meet community needs.

Planning Processes and Documents

The Town is involved in a variety of planning processes, as follows:

Community Action Statement (CAS): Erving uses the CAS as a guide for decision-making. The CAS, adopted in 1997, describes the Town's economic development, housing, infrastructure and service gaps, outlines the factors contributing to the needs, and identifies ways to meet the action goals to address the needs. Changes to priorities and goals are identified by each department head and communicated to the Board of Selectmen. The Board adopts annual goals, monitors progress and assists with securing financial, human, and other resources needed to meet the goals.

Master Plan (MP): The Erving Master Planning Committee, with assistance from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, completed a comprehensive MP in June 2002. This plan addresses four principal areas: open space and recreation, housing, economic development, and transportation. The plan emphasizes community development that is balanced with the preservation of natural, historic, and scenic resources and Erving's character.

Capital Plan: Each year members of the Community Development Committee meet to discuss long-range capital needs and priorities for the Town. Recommendations for capital planning, prioritization of needs and allocation of resources are recommended and discussed at Town Meeting.

Annual Town Report: Each year the town produces an Annual Town Report that contains detailed information about town processes, highlights progress made on a number of community development and planning projects, and identifies needs and priorities related to town governance, community development, social services, and public safety. Reports from various Boards, Committees, Commissions and Trustees are reviewed and accepted at each Annual Town Meeting. The report for the year ending December 31, 2013 was adopted at the 2014 Annual Town Meeting.

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

- Regional Policy Plan, 1998. This policy document guides the growth and protection of the natural and cultural resources of Franklin County. Produced by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments with significant input from 23-member committee.
- 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.
- The Greater Franklin County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2003 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 35 business and community leaders.
- Regional Transportation Plan, 2003. 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. An updated report for 2006 is pending.
- EO 418 Housing Certification: completed by the FRCOG and HRA for compliance with the Governor's Executive Order 418, this document reports several housing statistics and expected ten-year growth. The report lists the importance of providing affordable housing units for seniors, rental housing for families and special needs residents, preserving the current affordable housing stock through housing rehabilitation projects, outreach to help first-time homebuyers, the need for zoning review and updates, and the need to balance residential development with natural resource protection and several strategies to reach these needs.

Strategic Action Plan

The planning processes and documents described above were used to develop a comprehensive list of projects that the Town intends to undertake over the next three to five years. The Town's priorities, projects, and identified resources and funding sources are described in detail in the relevant planning documents. This list was presented to the public for comment in draft form at a meeting of the Board of Selectmen on 11-10-14 and 11-17-14. It is included beginning on page 4. Methods to meet some of the Town's specific goals are described in this proposal for funding and are summarized below. These projects clearly demonstrate the Town's endorsement of the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles. They reflect a focus on maintenance, improvement and redevelopment of existing buildings and infrastructure in the Town, as well as a commitment to improving economic conditions and quality of life for disadvantaged residents, and dedication to conserving critical natural resources in Erving.

Housing: The town's primary housing goals, as outlined in the CAS and MP, include correction of code violations, lead paint removal, removal of asbestos and repairs to septic systems. Preservation of existing housing stock is a high priority for the Town as a majority of Erving's residents live in single-family homes. The Housing Rehabilitation activity will preserve existing housing stock, particularly for elderly residents, through a no-interest, deferred payment loan program.

Economic Development: The town's main economic development goals, as identified in the CAS and the MP, include diversifying the types of businesses in Erving, promoting a stable tax base, providing jobs and services for Erving residents, and encouraging economic development that is balanced with the preservation of natural, historic, and scenic resources and the community's character. An Economic Development/MicroEnterprise Assistance activity will assist with the creation of local businesses that will provide goods and services to local residents through the provision of business technical assistance and training.

Resources

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

- Local property taxes
- Volunteer labor and donated materials
- Community fundraising activities (bake sales, book sales, silent auctions, etc.)
- State aid through school and transportation programs, lottery games, library programs and special status exemption funds
- Technical assistance and grants from regional organizations including Franklin County Community Development Corporation, Franklin County Council of Governments, Franklin Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority, and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.
- Grant and loan funding through the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Affairs, and other state agencies.
- Grant and loan funding through US Department of Agriculture, US Department of Housing and Community Development, and other federal agencies.

SPECIFIC PROJECTS

Project	Goal & Task	Funding Sources	Timeline	Priority
Economic Development				
Business promotion and support	Encourage and support local businesses and cottage businesses.	Franklin County CDC Business Lending Program	2015-2017	High #1
The Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority	Redeveloping and maintaining affordable housing for persons of all ages with low to moderate incomes.	Town Funds, MA Housing&Community Development, Franklin County HRA and Rural Development Inc (RDI)	2015-2017	High #1
Ervingside Scenic Byway Project	Sidewalks from new Senior Center to EES and downtown Rt 63 streetscape improvements	\$450,000 CT River Scenic Farm Byway streetscape improvement Congressional earmark	2015-2016	High #1
Mohawk Trail East Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan	Expand economic opportunities related to heritage and recreational tourism; Preserve the scenic, natural, and cultural resources along the byway.	Federal Transportation Bill (SAFETEA-LU)	2015-2017	Medium #1
Encourage private development at former IP Mill	Promote development of affordable work space to private investors.	CDBG, HUD, Priority Development Fund	2015-2017	High #1
Senior Housing	Develop specs and construct 20 senior units on Town site	CDBG, RDI, Private funds	2015-2017	High #1
Senior Center	Develop strong Senior program at new facility	Town funds	2015-2017	High #1
Usher Mill Plant	Facilitate reuses of this unique property.	Town funds, Brownfields funding, \$400,000 park grant	2015-2017	High #1
Promote micro businesses and home based entrepreneurs	Support owners with bylaws & assistance	Town funds, Federal funds	2015-2017	High #1

Public Works/Infrastructure	Goal & Task	Funding Sources	Timeline	Priority
Reconstruction of Church Street bridge	Reconstruction of bridge	Footprint Bridge Funds	2016	Medium #2
Environmental/ Conservation	Encourage use of Town conservation land on Old State Rd	State funds, Private funds	2015-2017	High #2
Other Planning Projects				
Preserve existing affordable Housing	Work with regional Housing Authority to improve quality and preserve existing affordable housing.	2015 CDBG funds, Franklin County HRA, Rural Development Inc.	2015-2017	High #1
Zoning By-laws for large scale solar systems	Encourage clean energy development, protect residential areas from intrusion	Town Funds	20152015-2017	High #1

TW	ongoing	Social Services	Support the Erving Council on Aging, Meals on Wheels program, food pantry and Erving Senior center for use of our seniors.	CDBG funds Volunteers and community donations
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