



Economic Development Subcommittee Agenda & Meeting Packet

April 2, 2026

7:00 PM

Meeting will be held at the Franklin Municipal Building
355 East Central Street – 2nd Floor, Council Chambers

A NOTE TO RESIDENTS: All citizens are welcome to attend public meetings in person. **To view the live meeting remotely, citizens** are encouraged to watch the live stream on the [Franklin Town Hall TV YouTube channel](#) or the live broadcast on Comcast Channel 9 and Verizon Channel 29. **To listen to the meeting remotely** citizens may call-in using this number: 1-929-205-6099. **To participate in the meeting remotely** citizens may join a [Zoom Webinar](#) using the information provided below. Meetings are recorded and archived by Franklin TV on the [Franklin Town Hall TV YouTube channel](#) and shown on repeat on Comcast Channel 9 and Verizon Channel 29.

ZOOM WEBINAR DETAILS: ID #853 1960 7858 & Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85319607858>

- **Any participants who wish to speak** during the webinar must enter their **full name and email address** when joining the webinar.
- All participants will be automatically muted upon joining the webinar. In order to speak, participants will need to select the “Raise Hand” function to request to be unmuted.
- All speakers will be required to state their full name and street address before commenting.

Agenda:

1. Introduction of Committee members
2. Economic Development Profile
 - a. I-495 Partnership Profiles
 - i. [Franklin Profile](#)
 - ii. [MetroWest Community Profiles](#)
 - iii. [Strength in Numbers Regional](#)
 - iv. [2025 Employer Survey](#)
 - b. [2016–2026 EDC Achievements](#)
 - c. [2025 Master Plan](#)
 - i. Economic Development Sections are Report Pages 13, 18–43, 195–198 and 231–235 are the implementation plan)
 - d. [2022 Downtown Franklin for All Study](#)
3. General discussion on next steps, priorities, and questions.
 - a. [2026–27 Town Council Goals: Economic Development Subcommittee](#)
4. Adjourn

This is a meeting of the Franklin Town Council Sub-Committee; under the Open Meeting Law, this subcommittee is a separate “public body” from the Town Council. Therefore, unless the Town Council has separately notified and posted its own meeting, Councilors who are not members of this subcommittee will not be permitted to speak or otherwise actively participate @ this meeting, although they may attend and observe. This prohibition is necessary to avoid the potential for an Open Meeting Law Violation



**TOWN
ADMINISTRATOR**
TOWN *of* FRANKLIN

MEMORANDUM

April 1, 2026

To: Economic Development Subcommittee
From: Jamie Hellen, Town Administrator

RE: Brief History of Economic Development Achievements

As I prepared for this meeting and set an agenda, I thought it may be helpful to list some areas of achievement in economic development over the past 5–10 years.

This is not a comprehensive list, but is an abbreviated list of highlights, especially considering there is not any staff dedicated to this area on the town staff.

1. Cannabis (2017)
 - a. Franklin was the first community to adopt the local option 3% excise (sales) tax.
 - b. Franklin approved a cannabis overlay zoning in 2017 with few regs.
 - c. We are the only community who retails cannabis in the area. The next closest communities are Millis and Milford.
 - d. FY25 data shows \$457,759 in cannabis sales tax that is in the operating budget. Collections began in 2022 and have grown each year.
 - e. Host Community funds, which are no longer legal, helped pay for the traffic signal at Washington Street, and lower Grove Street roadwork.
 - f. Host Community funds invested in mental health services for the FPS in 2019.
 - g. Host Community funds were also used for SAFE Coalition funding in 2018–2019.
 - h. NETA also invested in numerous properties, which has added significant new growth value to many properties in town. Their regional HQ is based in Franklin.
 - i. Many employees have purchased homes in town, which has also provided tax base value with renovations.

2. Artisan Spirits bylaw (2017) -
 - a. Led to GlenPharmer, La Cantina and 67 Degrees brewery
 - b. Additional meals tax revenues

- c. Both are regional attractions and unique featured businesses on many TV dining shows and websites for reviews, which further promotes bringing people into town
 - d. Properties have added new growth value
 - e. GlenPharmer also has a function hall in the building
3. Franklin Crossing neighborhood initiatives (2020).
- a. Revised neighborhood zoning giving it the village and vintage feel to preserve the village feel.
 - b. Expanded and modernized allowable uses in the zoning district.
 - c. SNETT Trail development will be a hub as this location will be the trailhead with municipal parking to an extensive multi-town, multi-state trail.
 - d. Franklin Children's Museum opened in 2025.
 - e. Investor at 305 Union Street, the old Mill Store, to renovate the property.
 - f. Acapulcos moved from downtown to the Crossing in 2020.
 - g. Expect significant residential and commercial investment in this neighborhood over the next 5-10 years, which will add property value and tax base to the town.
4. East Central Street redevelopment (2017)
- a. Ten years ago, this stretch was one of the most complained about eye sores in town due to the broken Keigan's car dealership, a vacant bowling alley and a bunch of other underutilized sites.
 - b. New shopping plaza with the Shed, Apricot Lane, Bellagio Nail Salon, Mykonos, Starbucks, and many other lunch and retail spots. Several stores are owned by local residents.
 - c. New, locally owned restaurants like Tavern on East Central, the Shed, Maha Juice Bar, Mykonos.
 - d. An expected revitalization of DeVita's Market!
 - e. Altitude Trampoline Park filled in a vacant big box store.
 - f. Fiori and Fern moved in between these neighborhood retail centers.
 - g. Staff understand the contentiousness of new housing development on the strip, including Taj Estates and 444 East Central, but these housing units will generate new growth tax base, meals tax revenues, and pedestrian foot traffic to local businesses on East Central Street and Downtown.
5. Franklin For All (2022)
- a. Franklin For All was a community-driven process to establish a vision for Franklin Center and surrounding areas. The Steering Committee, consisting of members of the EDC, Planning Board and ZBA, in partnership with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, gathered community feedback through many Committee meetings, an online survey, multiple public forums, focus groups, interviews with Town staff and engaging with the community at local festivals. With this [Executive Summary](#) the Committee recommended zoning changes to bring in new development and achieve the vision.

6. Restaurants
 - a. The Town has increased its presence, diversity and quantity of restaurants, which is great for choice, meals tax, and residents coming into Franklin.
 - b. Franklin is one of only a couple dozen communities who have “No Quota” on restaurant liquor licenses which makes Franklin a very desirable place to do business. It is easier to get restaurant licenses than any other community near us.
 - c. The Town has had a prosperous restaurant market post pandemic.
 - d. We are planning Franklin’s inaugural Restaurant Week, coming this Spring 2026!

7. Arts and Culture Development
 - a. The Town Council sponsored the “Arts and Culture” Master Plan, which formed a strategic Town Council subcommittee who issued the [final report](#).
 - b. Invested in a Director of Arts, Culture and Creative Economy to help support and grow the artisan economy in town through connections, grants and events.
 - c. Franklin Cultural District state certified in 2019.
 - d. World Cup preparation, promotion, and development 2026.

8. Tri-County Vocational School project
 - a. Many apprenticeships from Tri-County are connected to the industrial parks and other businesses in town.
 - b. Tri-County students are the future of many job sectors in the area.

9. Master Plan 2025
 - a. [2025 Master Plan](#) (Economic Development Section Report Pages 13, 18-43 and 195-198) has strategies.

10. Marketing and Branding (and advertising)
 - a. Spent a \$50,000 grant on a rebranding of the town for a modernized and consistent feel, but preserving the original town seal. Wayfinding signs were the end objective.
 - b. There has been between \$1,000 to \$10,000 in operating budget marketing and advertising money in the planning, administration or arts and culture budgets through the years. Some samples of the venues we have done some small outreach:
 - i. [MetroWest Visitors Guide](#)
 - ii. [Worcester Business Journal](#)
 - iii. A Franklin Business Summit has been another project that was on the docket, which has been shelved due to a lack of staff time. The Goal was to have an annual event where Franklin businesses can come together and network. The hope was to have hotels, restaurants, service providers, retailers, industrial park tenants and so forth attend a summit to all know who is in town and hopefully share business and support one another.

11. Cold Chain Technologies and Plansee “Tax Increment Financing” deals (TIFs).

12. Worked with the developer of 206 Grove St (UPS) to obtain a \$2.2M MassWorks Grant which funded improvements to Grove St, including construction of the multi-use path and roadwork connecting the road, sidewalk and the SNETT trail.
13. Nu-Style and 300 Fisher Street environmental cleanups will produce property with greater value to taxpayers and potential for further development and/or new growth tax base.
14. Staff constantly build positive working relationships with property owners through individual relationships and civic involvement with the Downtown Partnership, the three Chambers of Commerce in our area and other civic groups (YMCA, SAFE, Dean College, Interfaith Coalition and many more).
15. Reputation. Tech Review is a streamlined permitting process we offer all residents and businesses. Ask anyone in business and they appreciate the staff collaboration, responsiveness and streamlined system we have in town. For example, local resident, Bill Costa, who owns and operates Tavern of East Central made this comment in January, which is one thing Franklin is famous for:

"Hi Julie,

Thank you for responding so quickly. We are incredibly appreciative of all the assistance, support, and guidance we have received from everyone we have worked with at the town offices.

We have gone through the licensing / inspections processes in Boston, Newton, and many other towns...this has by far been the most efficient and enjoyable collaboration....no question.

We are very excited to finally get open and share The Tavern with our neighbors, and the community!

Thank you again for everyone's help!

Bill

Bill Costa
391 E Central Street
Franklin, MA 02038

Staffing History

Franklin has rarely had a dedicated staff member to coordinate economic development. Over ten years ago, there was a part-time individual in the Planning Office, but was later laid off due to budget cuts. For a town of 33,000-plus residents and a major commercial base to NOT have anyone dedicated to ED is a major gap in staffing for the town.

At the request of previous Councils, they desired to raise economic development work to town administration to highlight the importance of the issue and have a greater and more direct say into the issue (via the EDC).

The two Deputy Town Administrators, myself and Amy Frigulietti, then prioritized economic development projects, many of which are listed above, in concert with the Department of Planning and Community Development, town staff and community stakeholders.

2026-2027 EDC Goals

Last updated: March 4, 2026

The following are a list of proposed goals (not in any particular order) by the Town Council and Town Administrator for the 2024-2025 session.

Community Planning

Economic Development Goals:

- File a local home rule hotel tax legislation to charge an additional 2% on local hotel stays.
- Coordinate an annual or semi-annual restaurant week to generate an appetite for Franklinites to eat local and attract visitors to Franklin's diverse restaurant scene!

Master Plan Implementation Goals:

- Review and prioritize the economic development goals ([PDF Page 241](#)) contained within the master plan.
- [TC2.2](#) Explore options to fixed transit routes along Route 140.
- [S1.1a](#) | Explore DOER "Climate Leader" designation.
- [CSF5.2](#) | Explore additional composting options at Beaver Street Recycling Center.
- [LU5.1](#): Consider Form-based code for DC and C1 districts.
- [H1.1c](#): Evaluate use of 4OR Smart Growth Zoning Overlay District downtown.
- Develop a design for the town-owned SNETT parcel with the state [Department of Conservation and Recreation](#) as outlined in Objective 3.5 in the town [Open Space & Recreation Plan](#).
- Implement the preliminary phases of the approved master plans for [Schmidt Farm and Maple Hill](#) open space parcels as outlined in the town [Open Space & Recreation Plan](#) (using CPA funds).

Other notable Master Plan Implementation goals being worked on by town boards, which may include Town Council and Planning Board involvement:

- (Design Review Commission) [LU5.5a](#): Empower Design Review Commission to be an approving board or otherwise enforce design reviews. [LU5.5b](#): Update design guidelines.
- (Conservation Commission) [LU1.3a](#) Develop bylaws related to deforestation and options for habitat restoration.
- (Historical Commission) [LU5.3a](#): Create a historic district study committee per MA statute to investigate the desirability of establishing an historic district in Franklin.
- (Town Administrator, Town Attorney and Department of Planning & Community Development) A housecleaning zoning bylaw – a technical cleanup of some Zoning Use Regulations Schedule and outdated information in zoning bylaws, notably in the Crossing Neighborhood.
 - A subset of this is a house cleaning update to the town’s wireless communications zoning bylaws to reflect current federal and state laws.
- Create a historical record of the Franklin planning cycle plan reviews.
- Review the Standard Housing Index (SHI) for 40B housing only.