

Announcing A Western Massachusetts Town Hall Forum Co-Hosted By:

Massachusetts Selectmen's Association
Berkshire County Selectboard Association
Franklin Regional Council of Governments
Rural Policy Advisory Commission
Selectmen from Hampshire County

Massachusetts Municipal Association
Franklin County Selectboard Association
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Selectmen from Hampden County

We invite you to join us for something that has never been tried before:
A meeting of regional stakeholders, including municipal officials, planning agencies and legislators from Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire Counties of Western Massachusetts to address the challenges facing our region. These challenges include:

- ✓ A declining population
- ✓ A workforce skills gap
- ✓ Expensive infrastructure needs
- ✓ Housing
- ✓ Transportation,
- ✓ Growing Municipal costs with decreasing budgets

This forum is organized to promote collaborative working relationships among Western Massachusetts stakeholders and to share best practices so we can make progress in solving our regional challenges and advocating more effectively for our region. It will also feature a presentation on the newly-issued Rural Policy Plan which should be the guiding document for addressing issues across all of rural Massachusetts. **Please join us for this ground-breaking forum as we work to create sustainable cross-governmental partnerships across Western Massachusetts!**

When: Saturday, October 5th – 8:30am – 3:00pm

Where: UMass Amherst

Cost: \$35 (Light Lunch Included)

Conference Schedule

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 8:00 – 8:30 | Registration |
| 8:30- 8:45 | Opening Remarks and overview |
| 8:45- 10:00 | Presentation by the Rural Policy Advisory Commission on the newly- issued Rural Policy Plan for Massachusetts – Facilitated by Representative Paul Mark (D-Peru) and Jay Coburn, Executive Director Cape Cod Community Development Partnership |
| 10:00- 10:15 | Break |
| 10:15 – 10:45 | Keynote Address: Mike Kennealy, Secretary of Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development |

10:45 – 11:30 Forum Panel: Legislators from the Western Massachusetts Delegation

11:30-12:15 Lunch

12:15-1:15 Breakout Sessions 1 and 2

1. Growing Our Partnerships: Case studies of how municipalities large and small have reached across boundaries to partner with other communities on sharing services, loaning employees, and regionalization. Lessons from Division of Local Services.

Moderator: Eric Weiss PVPC

Panelists: Zack Blake, Division of Local Services
Bob Dean, Franklin Regional Council of Governments
Jason Hoch, Williamstown Town Manager

2. Growing Our Housing: What municipalities have done to promote housing development – CPA programs, housing trusts, mortgage assistance, home repairs, providing town land, accessory dwelling units, Housing Choice programs.

Moderator: Andy Hogeland, Williamstown Selectman

Panelists: Kay Lacey, Massachusetts Housing Partnership
Walter Ramsey, Montague Town Planner
Joanne Campbell, Executive Director, Valley Community Development Corporation (to be confirmed)

1:15-1:30 Break

1:30- 2:30 Breakout Sessions 3 and 4

3. Growing Our Revenue: Rationalizing PILOT payments for state-owned land; local tax options including CPA, hotel and meal, bed and breakfast and status of other local option proposals; cannabis taxation and host agreements; state grant programs advocacy for reducing regulatory requirements for municipalities

Moderator: Jim Lovejoy, Mt. Washington Selectman

Panelists: Jack Hunter, Planner, Town of Hudson
Chris Ketchen, Chief Administrative Officer Lee and Lenox
Zack Blake, Department of Revenue, Technical Assistance

4. Growing Our Population: Marketing our entire region and improving infrastructure to attract residents and businesses

Moderator: Jonathan Edwards, Whately Selectboard

Panelists: Jeanne Leclair, Hilltown CDC
Susan Strate, Donahue Institute
Nate Keenan, Massachusetts Clean Water Trust

2:30 Plenary Conclusion: Discussion of Next Steps