

The 2011 Berkshire Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

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Berkshire County, Massachusetts



Prepared By:



June, 2011

FUNDING PROVIDED BY THE U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION
SUBMITTED TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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Acknowledgements

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This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Berkshire County could not have been accomplished without the willing and active participation of communities, individuals and organizations, as well as the representatives at the United States Economic Development Administration, throughout the process.

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Executive Summary

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) is the designated regional planning agency for the Berkshire region, which includes 30 towns and 2 cities composing the Berkshire County area in western Massachusetts. In this capacity, the BRPC conducted a proactive regional planning process designed to create jobs, support and stabilize local and regional economies and improve the quality of life for all residents throughout the region.

The Berkshire County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) process is a coordinated regional planning process that documents economic development activities, ideas and information from throughout the Berkshires and presents a plan for the future economic development of the region. The CEDS process is administered by BRPC. For the CEDS process, BRPC was guided by an advisory committee, the CEDS Strategy Committee, of regional businesses, community representatives and regional economic related organizations.

The CEDS is both a process and a document. The benefits are:

- It enables municipalities and organizations to access U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant funds. An approved CEDS is a prerequisite to receive funding from EDA.
- It is an opportunity for municipalities and economic development related organizations throughout the region to share information about their economic development projects and initiatives and have them compiled into a region-wide effort. It provides an opportunity for a higher level of support for individual projects and initiatives than if those projects were presented individually.
- It is a mechanism for the economic development related interests in the region to convene and to develop coordinated and complementary approaches to economic development challenges, resulting in a stronger regional economy.

The CEDS process, document and committee are all closely related to, but not duplicative of, other economic development processes, documents and groups in the region. To insure that those related efforts are woven into all the aspects of the CEDS, economic interests from throughout the region are participants of the CEDS Strategy Committee or have been contacted throughout the overall process.

2011 Berkshire Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

The foundation of the 2011 Berkshire CEDS is the Vision Statement. The 2011 CEDS Vision Statement is: ***“To create a diverse and robust economy that creates sustainable prosperity for all its residents. While capitalizing on the region’s heritage, intellectual vigor, cultural assets, agricultural and natural resources we will encourage innovation, collaboration and entrepreneurial spirit.”*** From this statement, the CEDS Strategy Committee established six goals and twenty-two objectives to guide the CEDS process and future economic development. The goals and objectives represent a roadmap for the region’s economic growth and stability. These measures build upon the unique assets and abilities of the region and support key clustering industries and emerging entrepreneurial innovators to generate regional and local economic activity and capacity, particularly in underutilized or economically distressed areas. The 2011 Berkshire CEDS goals and objectives are:

Goal 1: To implement unified regional economic development initiatives.

Objectives

- *Develop mechanisms to guide the implementation of regional economic development initiatives*
- *Foster and promote regional economic and workforce development*
- *Strengthen and expand economic cooperation and collaboration regionally and beyond the region’s borders*
- *Develop mechanisms, as appropriate, to respond to unexpected economic losses*

Goal 2: To advance the region's economic progress through the use of current and pertinent data.

Objectives

- *Maintain and expand data and information collection capacity for regional analysis and performance evaluation*
- *Proactively identify and assess the challenges and changes in the economic and demographic conditions of the region*
- *Identify and quantify emerging and changing conditions of business and industry*

Goal 3: To increase the economic competitiveness of the region in the global economy.

Objectives

- *Proactively retain and expand regionally based and locally emerging businesses and industries*
- *Provide a comprehensive package of business development resources to the region's established and emerging businesses*
- *Encourage economic vitality of emerging industry clusters, the creative economy and innovative businesses in the region*
- *Expand regional capacities to inventory and market sites and buildings for the region's economic development*
- *Attract new businesses and industries to the region to expand the region's economy*

Goal 4: To stabilize and strengthen the region's workforce.

Objectives

- *Develop a well-educated and highly skilled workforce of all ages to stabilize and expand the regional labor pool*
- *Align educational offerings and workforce development programs with the evolving needs of the marketplace*
- *Enhance and position the regional workforce system to align with and support regional job seekers and business needs*
- *Encourage and support the goals of the Berkshire Compact for Education*

Goal 5: To advance high-quality infrastructure and community improvements to support development, redevelopment and revitalization of the built environment.

Objectives

- *Provide a 21st Century capable telecommunications infrastructure throughout the region*
- *Maintain and upgrade the Region's transportation network*
- *Support community-driven initiatives to improve urban and town centers to stimulate economic activity*
- *Build a modern, reliable and affordable energy network*
- *Ensure the orderly expansion and upgrade of housing and other support facilities to accommodate the region's expanding economic needs*

Goal 6: To facilitate the region's assessment, remediation and redevelopment of buildings and sites.

Objectives

- *Support regional initiatives and efforts to address contaminated properties in the region*
- *Create a mechanism for the redevelopment and reuse of underutilized mills and other buildings and sites*

The CEDS Strategy Committee took the following steps to establish goals and objectives and set a broad foundation for the CEDS report. It assessed the region's characteristic data, considered comments and concerns received during a public outreach initiative, defined the region's opportunities, strengths, threats and weaknesses and looked at past, present and proposed investments in the region that support economic development and growth. The CEDS Strategy Committee also built upon previous studies and reports commissioned to analyze "cluster" industries in the region (*2006 Rural Clusters of Innovation: Berkshires Strategy Project*) and past CEDS planning efforts (*2001 CEDS and the draft 2004 CEDS*).

The Berkshires, a self-contained economic and social area, has limited interrelationships with the surrounding regions, particularly Albany, NY and Springfield, MA. While those areas have experienced growth, Berkshire County has experienced forty years of steady population decline. This population loss, -12.17% since 1970, correlates with the significant number of manufacturing job losses that have continued into the 2000's. There are strong indications that population losses may be slowing, according to the most recent U.S. Census Bureau population data (2010 Census).

According to the American Community Survey of 2006-2008 data, the labor force (population 16 years of age and over) was 73,188 or 55.7% of the total population. The 2009 annual average unemployment for the region was 5,892 persons and was at a rate of 8.1%, per the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development. This unemployment rate has increased from the previous years, similar to the state and nation. It is consistent with the sustained job losses regionally and the recent economic recession nationally. Unemployment data does not reflect the issue of underemployment or the quality of jobs. The issues of poverty and working poor continue to represent a significant portion of the population of Berkshire County, as evident in the low per capita personal income (\$28,074).

Significant areas of opportunity and strength exist that could be used to leverage and facilitate economic development and growth and overcome the challenges for Berkshire County's economy. These include a strong presence of regional collaboration, a culturally and naturally rich environment and a strong tradition of innovation. The adaptive reuse and redevelopment of underutilized or vacant structure and properties could offset the limited amount of available developable land. A coordinated regional economic development process can better direct the use of limited state and federal funds to identified areas of need and prioritized projects and programs, primarily within existing built areas. The Berkshire Strategic Alliance, Inc is an organization being assembled to facilitate regional economic development activities. The region has an opportunity to maximize public and private investment, while preserving other important areas.

One of the EDA requirements for a CEDS is, "A section identifying and prioritizing vital projects, programs and activities that address the region's greatest needs or that will best enhance the Region's competitiveness, including sources of funding for past and potential future investments (13 CFR §303.7.) The Berkshire Project Priority list was prepared to meet that requirement. It is an inventory of regional economic development proposals submitted for consideration by citizens, communities and organizations located throughout the region, including proposals submitted by CEDS Strategy Committee members. These proposals represent economic development initiatives, programs and projects, that if implemented would help diversify, stabilize and strengthen the region's economy. This list should be considered as an initial starting point for an ongoing process of identifying and tracking regionally significant economic development proposals. Although extensive efforts were made to assemble a comprehensive list from across the county, responses to solicitations for projects were uneven, not always representing the breadth of economic development activities occurring in the region or allowing for a full evaluation by CEDS Committee members. In addition, some important proposed projects may have been missed. In developing this list, the CEDS committee stressed that the annual review and update will be an important way to keep identifying, refining and improving the prioritization of regionally significant economic development projects in Berkshire County.

After considering the eighty-two project proposals, the CEDS Strategy Committee developed a project prioritization structure and a list of the projects to be included on the priority list. This Project Priority List contains the following thirty-three programs and projects.

Projects Representing the Greatest Needs Regionally

- Regional Telecommunications Network
- Pittsfield Municipal Airport Safety Improvements
- Regional Highway Access Improvements, including a north-south Limited Access Highway serving central and northern Berkshire County
- Alternative Energy and Energy Infrastructure Improvements
- Regional Passenger Rail Improvements

Projects that Enhance the Region: Physical Development Category

North Sub-Region

- Development of the Greylock Glen Outdoor Recreation & Environmental Education Center
- Former Commonwealth Sprague Site
- Route 8 Corridor Redevelopment

Central Sub-Region

- Life Science Center @ William Stanley Business Park
- William Stanley Business Park
- Crane Stationery Mill Redevelopment
- Hubbard Avenue Development Area
- Sport Complex
- Civic Center/Hotel

South Sub-Region

- New England Log Homes
- River School Redevelopment
- Redevelopment of Great Barrington Fairgrounds
- Monument Mills Area Reuse Planning
- Redevelopment of Historic Great Barrington Firehouse
- Housatonic School Redevelopment

Projects that Enhance the Region: Physical and Technology Infrastructure Category

- West Street Water Line Upgrade
- DownStreet Art Project
- McKay Street Pedestrian Improvements and Parking Garage Restoration

Projects that Enhance the Region: Programs and Initiative Category

- Adaptive Reuse of Mills
- City of Pittsfield Municipal Airport Industrial Park Feasibility Study
- Regionalization of the City of Pittsfield's Municipal Airport
- Berkshire Farm-to-School Feasibility Study
- Regional Economic Development District
- Housatonic Railroad Station Planning Feasibility Study
- Downtown Parking Strategy
- Berkshire Creative Initiative

Projects that Enhance the Region: Education and Workforce Development Category

- Berkshire Hills Internship Program
- Berkshire Creative Initiative

The CEDS process is an ongoing process. An *Action Plan for Economic Prosperity* is an implementation program designed to accomplish the overall Vision and goals and objectives put forth in the CEDS document. A component of that Action Plan is an annual review of the progress that has been made, measured against defined performance measures. Another component of the Action Plan is to work with project proponents to refine and further develop proposals in order to present the strongest economic development proposals possible.

The Berkshire County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy emphasizes regionally economic planning. Through regional collaborations and partnerships, the CEDS process has and will continue to spur an energized conversation of the region's economic future. Participants in the process have invested time and energy to insure this strategy is implemented. It is expected they will remain involved in the ongoing process that is the CEDS. As this CEDS planning process culminates in the publication of the five-year plan, it is recognized to be only the beginning of a route to economic prosperity and stability for the region.

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Program and Berkshire CEDS Process

What is the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy program?

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) program, administered by the Economic Development Administration (EDA), was established by Congress under the *Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965*, as amended. Through later legislation, the *Economic Development Administration Reform Act of 1998*, new federal regulations were enacted to establish the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy program, replacing the previous Overall Economic Development Program (OEDP). The EDA was reauthorized through the *Economic Development Administration Reauthorization Act of 2004*, to administer and regulate programs such as the CEDS through fiscal year 2008. The EDA is in the process of re-authorization; however, the regulation that governs how the EDA operates and makes investments has already been updated as of January, 2010. This final ruling of the EDA's *Final Regulations* clarified and established the final regulations governing the EDA.

The CEDS program was established as an economic development planning tool to assist communities, regions and states to advance economic development activities, programs, and projects. The CEDS program is designed to:

“...bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies...serve as a guide for establishing regional goals and objectives, developing and implementing a regional plan of action, and identifying investment priorities and funding sources.”

Economic Development Administration, CEDS Flyer

Through the CEDS program, a qualifying economic development organization works to identify a region's flexibility to adapt to the ever changing global economy, persistent economic distresses and learn to utilize the region's assets to maximize economic opportunity that fosters growth and job creation and retention for the region's residents. Since the CEDS process is a pre-requisite to receive EDA grant funding, the completion of the CEDS will enable the region to access funding and assistance.

What is the Berkshire CEDS History?

The region compiled an Overall Economic Development Plan in 1993 and completed its first CEDS in 2001. A draft CEDS was prepared in 2004 but never received final approval. The challenging factors of the CEDS continuing success have been the ever changing political makeup of the region's communities and the limited funds available to support the staff necessary to facilitate the CEDS Strategy Committee and the ongoing work to keep the many components of economic planning process together.

While the prospect of local and state funding sources has increasingly diminished, during these economically hard times, communities are struggling to maintain only the most basic and vital of

services. The Berkshires can no longer afford to miss funding and assistance opportunities from any source, due to a lack of economic development planning, vision, or an action plan for the region. Therefore, the 2011 CEDS Strategy Committee has committed itself to taking the necessary steps to ensure the CEDS process succeeds and the economic future of the region is stable and prosperous. The CEDS Strategy Committee acknowledges the imperative need for the region to speak with a unified voice.

What is the Berkshire CEDS process?

On June 11, 2010, the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission received funding from the EDA to commence an update to the CEDS for Berkshire County. To accomplish this task, the 2011 Berkshire CEDS Strategy Committee was formed in October, 2010. The CEDS Strategy Committee has been charged with fulfilling the mandates of the CEDS program, as regulated by the EDA, but was also selected to ensure that the CEDS is developed in a manner that benefits its constituents and is in keeping with their goals and values. The CEDS Strategy Committee conducted a process that: 1) assessed the region's economic stability and indicators (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats), 2) established a regional vision, goal and objectives, and 3) developed a list of project priorities; (essentially, creating an economic roadmap to broaden and strengthen the regional economy). Knowing the region's economy was fluid, the CEDS Strategy Committee also identified procedures (Action Plan) to track and update economic development activities in the region and to re-evaluate the CEDS process on an annual basis.

Berkshire CEDS Strategy Committee

The Berkshire CEDS Strategy Committee, representing a diverse cross section of individuals, groups and stakeholders, was drawn from a broad spectrum of disciplines representative of the County's communities, institutions, non-profit organizations and population, all with a common interest in improving the regional economy.

The CEDS Strategy Committee members were selected by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. Individuals with a broad knowledge and understanding of the region's economy and who could embody the major constituencies of the Berkshires we invited to participate. Community representatives from the three municipalities in the region representing the county's geographic sub-regions were invited to participate on the CEDS Strategy Committee. Though it was not possible to have representatives from all 32 municipalities in the region, they were encouraged to participate in the overall CEDS process through direct outreach and solicitation of potential economic development projects. Other CEDS Strategy Committee members represent an assortment of the region's various community sectors and interests including business and economic development organizations, community groups, education and social service fields, employment and training organizations, major industries of the region, and are a diverse mixture of ethnicities and genders. A detailed listing of the CEDS leadership can be found in Appendix C.

The CEDS process is a participatory planning process. To ensure that this process is as transparent and open as possible, all CEDS Strategy Committee meetings have been open to the public and the agendas and minutes of those meetings have been available electronically on the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission website (www.berkshireplanning.org). A collection of those meeting agendas and minutes can be found in Appendix G for reference.

Berkshire CEDS Staff

Staff support for the CEDS process was provided by Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, specifically Nathaniel W. Karns, Executive Director; Thomas Matuszko, Assistant Director; Daniel J. Sexton, Planner; and Mark Maloy, GIS/Data Coordinator. The staffing services provided by BRPC included preparing the CEDS report, coordinating the Strategy Committee, including planning and dissemination of meeting agendas and minutes, conducting public communication (including the CEDS webpage and BRPC's *Common Ground* Newsletter articles and inserts), preparing and analyzing information on the regional economy, developing project evaluation alternatives, and identifying strategy options and detailed action and implementation plans. A detailed listing of the CEDS staffing can be found in Appendix C.

CEDS Work Program

The plan for updating the 2011 Berkshire CEDS was established by the CEDS Strategy Committee at their first meeting on October 26, 2010. The approach for the 2011 CEDS process was to:

1. Conduct a thorough evaluation of the previous CEDS processes and the region's community economic development planning efforts;
2. Perform an analysis of the region's economic condition, through an assessment of the region's characteristics (i.e. Demographic, Economic, Environmental/Geographical, Governmental, Social and Transportation/Infrastructure) and influencing factors (Chapter 2);
3. Establish a working list of potential economic development program and project ideas. To establish this list, letters were sent to the 32 communities and economic development oriented organizations from around the region;
4. Conduct further evaluation of the region's economic stability by obtaining broad public input. This input was gathered through three public meetings, held in strategic location throughout the region, at which the following was discussed: the CEDS process; history of CEDS in the Berkshire; regional trends; strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; and potential economic development program and project ideas.
5. Establish goals and objectives for the region. After reviewing results from the research and outreach processes above, the CEDS Strategy Committee established goals and objectives for the region (the identified goals and objects are listed in Chapter 4);
6. Evaluate and rank potential economic development projects, program or activities. With the established goals and objects as guidance, the CEDS Strategy Committee evaluated and ranked the submitted economic development activity, program and project ideas. The result of this process was the *Project Priority List* (for a breakdown of the project priority list, please refer to Chapter 4);
7. Prepare an implementation strategy for the region's regionally based activities. These strategies will be a starting point for the Performance measures to track the implementation of economic development activities throughout the region (the implementation strategies can be found in Chapter 5);
8. Establish performance measures to evaluate the implementation of the CEDS for the region. These measures will help to track and update economic development activities in the region and to re-evaluate the CEDS process on an annual basis (further details on the performance measures can be found in Chapter 6).

Cooperation and Public Outreach

The CEDS process is a participatory endeavor. The CEDS Strategy Committee gave great emphasis from the beginning to collaborate and reach out to the communities, organizations, and the populous of the region. The committee members, communities, organizations and individuals that participated in the CEDS process were dedicated to creating a sustainable economic future for the region and building a network of regional cooperation, both necessary components to maintaining the CEDS planning process. In the past, there have been various economic planning efforts and initiatives exploring economic development issues and searching for solutions appropriate to the size, character, historic economic performance, and environmental ethos of the Berkshire region, or subsets of its cities and towns. Those include the *Berkshire Regional Competitiveness Council*, the *Northern Tier Study*, the *Jobs for Pittsfield* strategy and the *Rural Clusters of Innovation: Berkshires Strategy Project* (also known as the Berkshire Blueprint). From these efforts there is a substantial cross-over of members of the CEDS Strategy Committee.

That cross-over can be seen with representatives from the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, the Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, the Berkshire Economic Development Corporation, and the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, which have well recognized and established economic development roles in this region. Each of these organizations has a particular interest in or focus on the region's economic landscape. Each answers to its own mission and board. However, they understand the need for the Berkshires to maintain a unified effort when it comes to economic development. As a comprehensive strategy, the Berkshire CEDS presents goals and objects affecting all aspects of the economic development realm, including: identification of infrastructure and transportation improvements, development of incentives and/or loan programs to encourage economic development/redevelopment, planning for regional housing and social demands, recognizing workforce development needs, regional marketing, and many others.

Knowing the importance of the Berkshire CEDS process and the need for the region to speak with a unified regional voice, the region's economic development organizations have been essential partners in of the 2011 Berkshire CEDS process.

In an effort to broaden the involvement and support for the Berkshire CEDS process, the communities and populous of the Berkshires were invited to submit comments and input. Occasions at which participation and support for the process was gathered included:

- A letter that was sent to the Town Board of Selectmen, Town Administrators/Managers, and/or designated City representatives soliciting their suggestions for potential economic development project activity, program and project ideas in their community.
- Three separate public meetings, held in strategic locations throughout the region, to collect information on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing communities and the region.
- In accordance with the EDA regulations, the public was given the opportunity to comment on the 2011 Berkshire CEDS document through a 30-day public comment period (April 16, 2011 through May 16, 2011). This public notice was posted in local newspapers, on the BRPC website and at the BRPC offices. Copies of the public notice and comments received during the comment period can be found in Appendix D.
- The CEDS Strategy Committee was also asked to spread the word of the CEDS process throughout its progression.

In addition to the collaborative and public outreach efforts listed above, the CEDS Strategy Committee allowed public input at all scheduled meetings and made available through BRPC resources, mainly the

BRPC webpage (www.berkshireplanning.org), copies of all the CEDS Strategy Committee proceedings. Copies of these proceedings can be found in Appendix G.

As stakeholders and partners in the region's economic future, the individuals, communities and regional organizations providing substantial input and observations during the CEDS process, contributed to a well structure and ambitious Berkshire CEDS. This economic planning document will help to facilitate and guide the economic development efforts for the region, specifically targeting a wide array of funding sources, the establishment of Berkshire County as an Economic Development District, and a well-established list of local economic projects. As a whole, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy planning process is expected to become a significant resource used to guide the economic development activities of the region.

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Chapter 2: What are the Berkshires?

A Snapshot of the Berkshire Region

Berkshire County is the western most region of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, is bordered to the north by Vermont, on the west by New York, on the south by Connecticut, and on the east by the Massachusetts' counties of Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden. The Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90) provides prime highway access to the county, while other major routes (US Routes 7 & 20 and State Highways 2, 8, & 9) also transect the region. Berkshire County's location, about 2-1/2 hours from both Boston and the New York City metro area and about 1 hour from Albany, New York and the Springfield/Hartford metro area, coupled with its outstanding beauty has made the region famous as a vacation destination. A large seasonal population of urbanites has second homes or stays in resorts and motels, camp at the numerous state parks, visit friends, or simply drive through the area. Pastoral amenities are complemented by major cultural facilities such as Tanglewood, Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Arts, Clark Art Institute, Norman Rockwell Museum, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, and the many well-regarded theater venues, including Shakespeare and Company in Lenox, Berkshire Theater Festival in Stockbridge, Williamstown Theater Festival, and Barrington Stage Company.

Berkshire's municipal composition consists of two cities (North Adams and Pittsfield) and thirty towns (Adams, Alford, Becket, Cheshire, Clarksburg, Dalton, Egremont, Florida, Great Barrington, Hancock, Hinsdale, Lanesborough, Lee, Lenox, Monterey, Mount Washington, New Ashford, New Marlborough, Otis, Peru, Richmond, Sandisfield, Savoy, Sheffield, Stockbridge, Tyringham, Washington, West Stockbridge, Williamstown, and Windsor). The landmass of the Berkshires covers an area of 605,400 acres or 946 square miles. Elevations throughout the Berkshires range from 3,491 feet at Mount Greylock, the highest point in the state, to 566 feet on the Hoosic River in the Town of Williamstown. There are two main rivers systems in the county, the Hoosic River (in the north) and the Housatonic River (in the south). The landscape of the region is dominated by the Taconic Mountain (to the west) and the Berkshire Hills (to the east); thus most of the region's development has been constrained or clustered to the valley lands. The climate of the region is generally cooler than the neighboring regions to the east and west, due to the microclimates generated by the rugged borders of the region.

Based on recent surveys of the developed land within the region, approximately 7 percent of the county is developed, primarily for residential/commercial purposes. The remaining lands (approximately 93 percent) consist of water bodies; recreational land; forest; wetlands; and agriculture.

The United States Census Bureau, Census Survey of 2010 determined the population of the Berkshires to be at 131,219 persons, a drop of 12.17% since 1970. The county's historic population peak of 149,402 persons was recorded in the 1970 Census. Of the county's total population, during the U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census, almost half (44.5%) of the regional population was concentrated in its two cities, Pittsfield with 44,737 persons and North Adams with 13,708 persons. A breakdown of the data indicated that 92.50% of the county's population classified themselves as white; while 2.72% classified themselves as African American; the remaining 4.78% of the population were comprised of Asian, American Indian and Alaskan Natives, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders, and individuals of Some Other Race. There was also 3.45% of the total population that classified themselves as people of Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race).

Although much of the county is rural in character, the economic base of the region is dominated by the health care and social assistance industries, which represents 18.9% of the county's total jobs. The three largest employers in the Berkshires are Berkshire Health Systems (3,089 workers), and Pittsfield Public

Schools (1,563 workers) and General Dynamic Advanced Information Systems (1,067 workers). Based on the American Community Survey (ACS) of 2006-2008 data, the per capita personal income estimate for the county (in 2008 inflation-adjusted dollars) was \$28,074, ranking the region 9 of the 12 counties in the state measured in the ACS, and about 83% of the state average of \$33,806. The labor force (population 16 years of age and over) was 73,188 or 55.7% of the total population. The 2009 annual average unemployment for the region was 5,892 persons and was at a rate of 8.1%.

Due to the well-defined physical features, geographic relationships, political boundaries, historic traditions, internal social and economic interdependence the county represents a true region.

Berkshires Regional Analysis and Influences

The Berkshire consists of 32 towns and cities, but is also economically influenced by the adjacent CEDS Regions of Hampshire, Hampden and Hartford Counties (Knowledge Corridor), and the Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady counties (New York Capital District); therefore, an aggregation of municipal and regional data is most appropriate for analyzing the economic standing of the Berkshires. The most comprehensive data presently available to conduct this analysis comes from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2000 and 2010 Census, the American Community Survey 2006-2008, and Census Population Estimates 2009; however, there were additional sources of data (i.e. U.S. Department of Treasury, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, etc.) that were used to evaluate the region's economic condition.

Map 1: A Locus Map of the Population Areas surrounding Berkshire County



Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

Knowing that the methodology and line of questioning is different for each data source, there is limited capacity for comparability. Beginning with the 2010 Census, the sample survey will no longer be conducted. The American Community Survey (ACS), an annual sample survey conducted across the country that releases data either in one-year, three-year or five-year average estimates, will replace the decennial census sample survey questioning. Therefore, to ensure that the data used within this report is applicable and has a capacity for comparison in the future, emphasis has been given to data provided through the ACS. Furthermore, starting in 2010, the ACS will start producing data for all areas of the country, including geographic areas with populations of less than 20,000 people. This is significant

for the Berkshires, since all of the municipalities within Berkshire County, except Pittsfield, are under the above reference population threshold.

Data from the 2010 Census has been incorporated below; however, not all of the 2010 Census data had been released at the time of this report's development.

Demographic Characteristics

Population

From 1970 to 2010, Berkshire County has experienced a negative 12.17% change in population. In contrast, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (State) saw a population increase of 15.09%, and the nation's population increased by 51.87%. A closer examination of the data, shown in Table 1, indicates that Berkshire County encountered its greatest population change during the 1980's with 5,758 persons leaving the region.

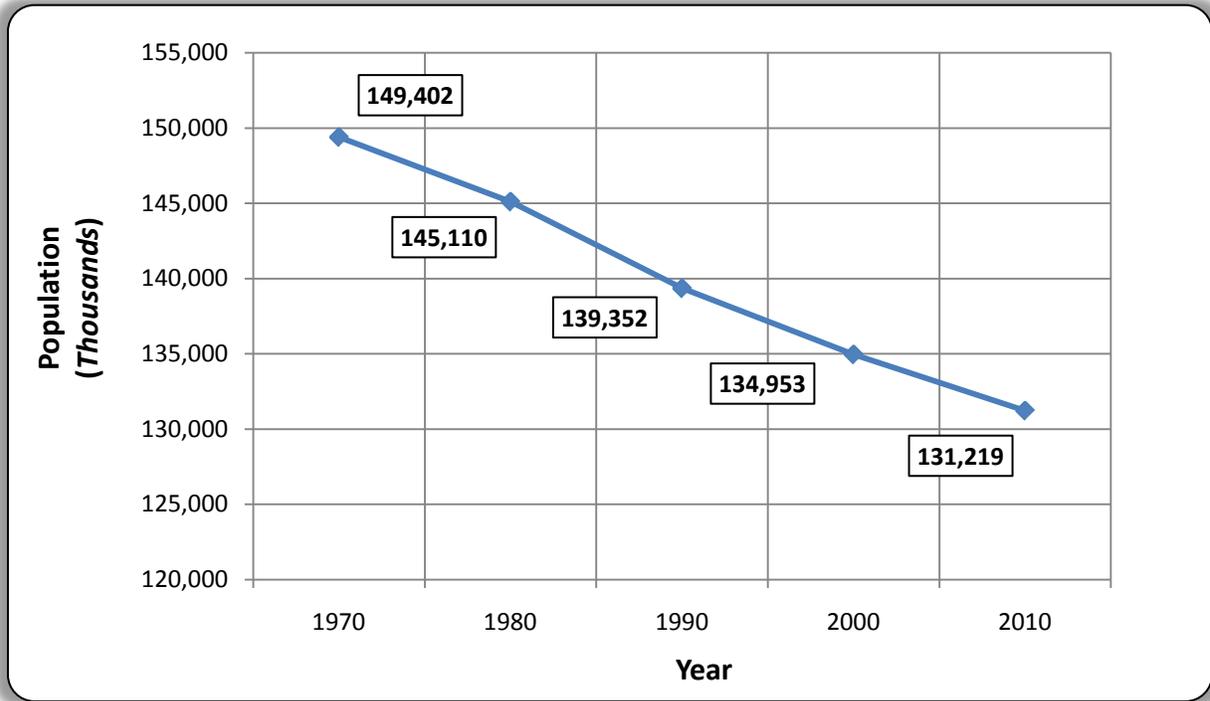
As shown in the *Changes in Total Population of Berkshire County, 1970-2010* table (Table 1), the largest communities of the county (commonly known as the "Valley" communities) had population changes in the negative; while stability or in some instances substantial population growth occurred at the edges of the county (commonly known as the "Hill" communities). This disparity of population change amongst the communities of the Berkshires is most apparent in those communities over 2,500 people, except for the towns of Cheshire and Lanesborough, in that those communities experienced a negative population change. The largest population decrease occurred in the City of North Adams, which lost 28.59% of its population during this time period. There were 11 other communities in the county that experienced a negative population change. Through a comparison of community level population changes with that of the state's population change (15.09%), 17 of the county's communities were below the state's population change percentage.

Table 1: Changes in Total Population of Berkshire County, 1970-2010

Population Area	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	Change	% Change
United States	203,302,031	226,542,199	248,718,291	281,421,906	308,745,538	105,443,507	51.87%
Massachusetts	5,689,170	5,737,093	6,016,425	6,349,097	6,547,629	858,459	15.09%
<i>Berkshire County</i>	<i>149,402</i>	<i>145,110</i>	<i>139,352</i>	<i>134,953</i>	<i>131,219</i>	<i>-18,183</i>	<i>-12.17%</i>
Adams	11,772	10,381	9,445	8,809	8,485	-3,287	-27.92%
Alford	302	394	418	399	494	192	63.58%
Becket	929	1,339	1,481	1,755	1,779	850	91.50%
Cheshire	3,006	3,124	3,479	3,401	3,235	229	7.62%
Clarksburg	1,987	1,871	1,745	1,686	1,702	-285	-14.34%
Dalton	7,505	6,797	7,155	6,892	6,756	-749	-9.98%
Egremont	1,138	1,311	1,229	1,345	1,225	87	7.64%
Florida	672	730	742	676	752	80	11.90%
Great Barrington	7,537	7,405	7,725	7,527	7,104	-433	-5.74%
Hancock	675	643	628	721	717	42	6.22%
Hinsdale	1,588	1,707	1,959	1,872	2,032	444	27.96%
Lanesborough	2,972	3,131	3,032	2,990	3,091	119	4.00%
Lee	6,426	6,247	5,849	5,985	5,943	-483	-7.52%
Lenox	5,804	6,523	5,069	5,077	5,025	-779	-13.42%
Monterey	600	818	805	934	961	361	60.17%
Mount Washington	52	93	135	130	167	115	221.15%
New Ashford	183	159	192	247	228	45	24.59%
New Marlborough	1,031	1,160	1,240	1,494	1,509	478	46.36%
North Adams	19,195	18,063	16,797	14,681	13,708	-5,487	-28.59%
Otis	820	963	1,073	1,365	1,612	792	96.59%
Peru	256	633	779	821	847	591	230.86%
Pittsfield	57,020	51,974	48,622	45,793	44,737	-12,283	-21.54%
Richmond	1,461	1,659	1,677	1,604	1,475	14	0.96%
Sandisfield	547	720	667	824	915	368	67.28%
Savoy	322	644	634	705	692	370	114.91%
Sheffield	2,374	2,743	2,910	3,335	3,257	883	37.19%
Stockbridge	2,312	2,328	2,408	2,276	1,947	-365	-15.79%
Tyringham	234	344	369	350	327	93	39.74%
Washington	406	587	615	544	538	132	32.51%
West Stockbridge	1,354	1,280	1,483	1,416	1,306	-48	-3.55%
Williamstown	8,454	8,741	8,220	8,424	7,754	-700	-8.28%
Windsor	468	598	770	875	899	431	92.09%

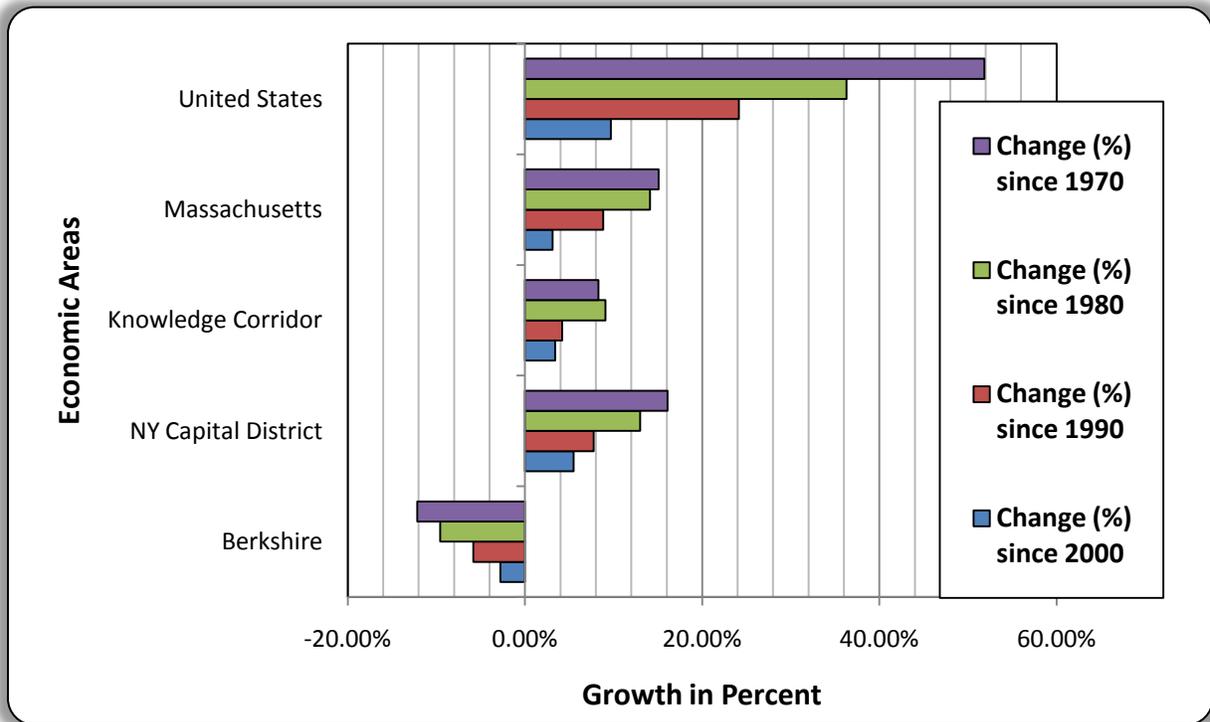
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1970-2010 Censuses

Figure 1: Population Trend for Berkshire County, 1970-2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1970-2010 Census

Figure 2: Population Trend Comparison of Regions Adjoining Berkshire County, 1970-2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1970-2010 Census

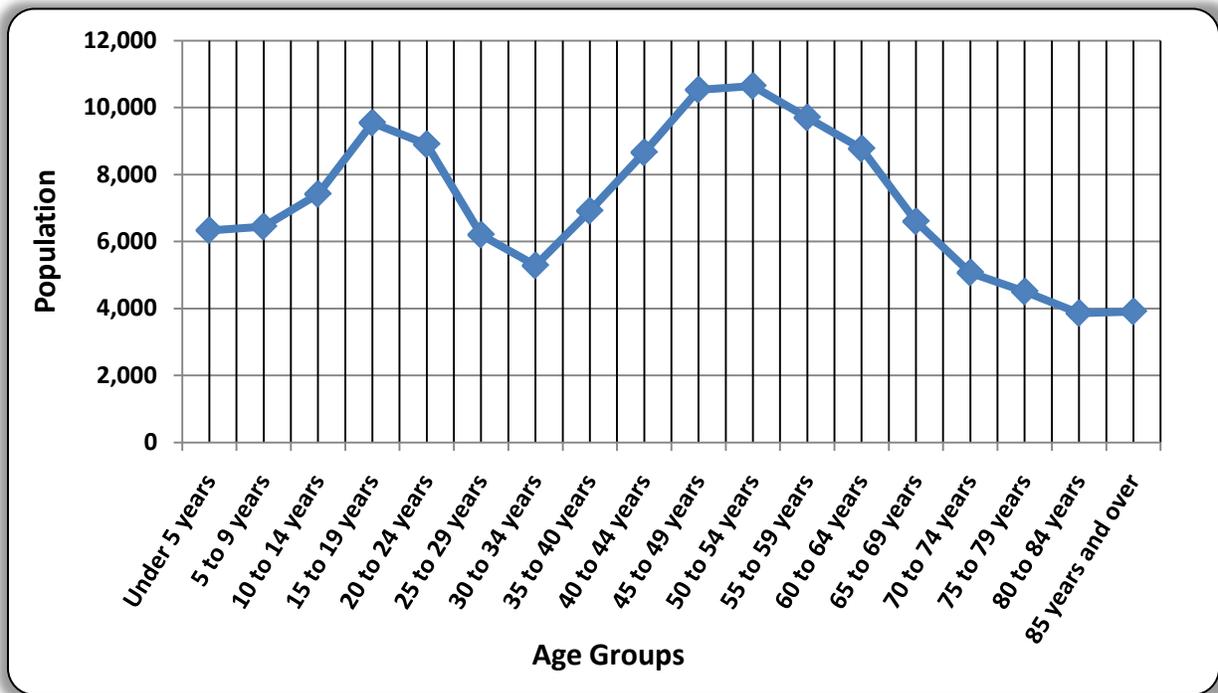
As shown in the Figure 1, the population trend for Berkshire County has been steadily declining since 1970. In total, the region has seen a -12.17% population change between 1970 and 2010. A comparison of Berkshire County to the adjoining economic regions of the New York Capital District and the Knowledge Corridor, Figure 2, shows that while Berkshire County has experienced a declining population the surrounding economic regions have steadily been increasing in population. Likewise, the population trends for the state and nation also showed an increase in population during this same time period.

Not represented within the region’s population data, the influx of persons (part-time or seasonal employee) during the tourist season, May-October, is an influencing factor of the region’s economy. These persons account for a large percentage of the part-time or seasonal employee base.

Age Distribution

Presented in the *Population by Age for Berkshire County, 2009* graph (Figure 3) is a breakdown of the county’s population by age cohort. According to the data, the county’s population consists largely of older individuals, specifically those persons between the ages of 45-65 years of age. From this population by age breakdown, there are a couple key trends of note in the region that impact economic planning. First, is the trend that indicates a large population loss (commonly known as “human capital flight”) of individuals leaving the region after high school graduation. The subsequent age groups of college bound students, primarily those individuals between the ages of 20 to 30 years old, represent a large young adult age group with a high level of consumer spending as well as a large source of temporary part-time and full-time employment potential. Much of this population is the result of the region’s higher educational institutions such as Williams College, the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Bard College at Simon’s Rock and the Berkshire Community College. As this age group graduates from college, a significant pool of highly educated and newly trained individuals will enter the workforce. For employers who are seeking college educated and entry-level employees, this age cohort presents great potential.

Figure 3: Population by Age for Berkshire County, 2009

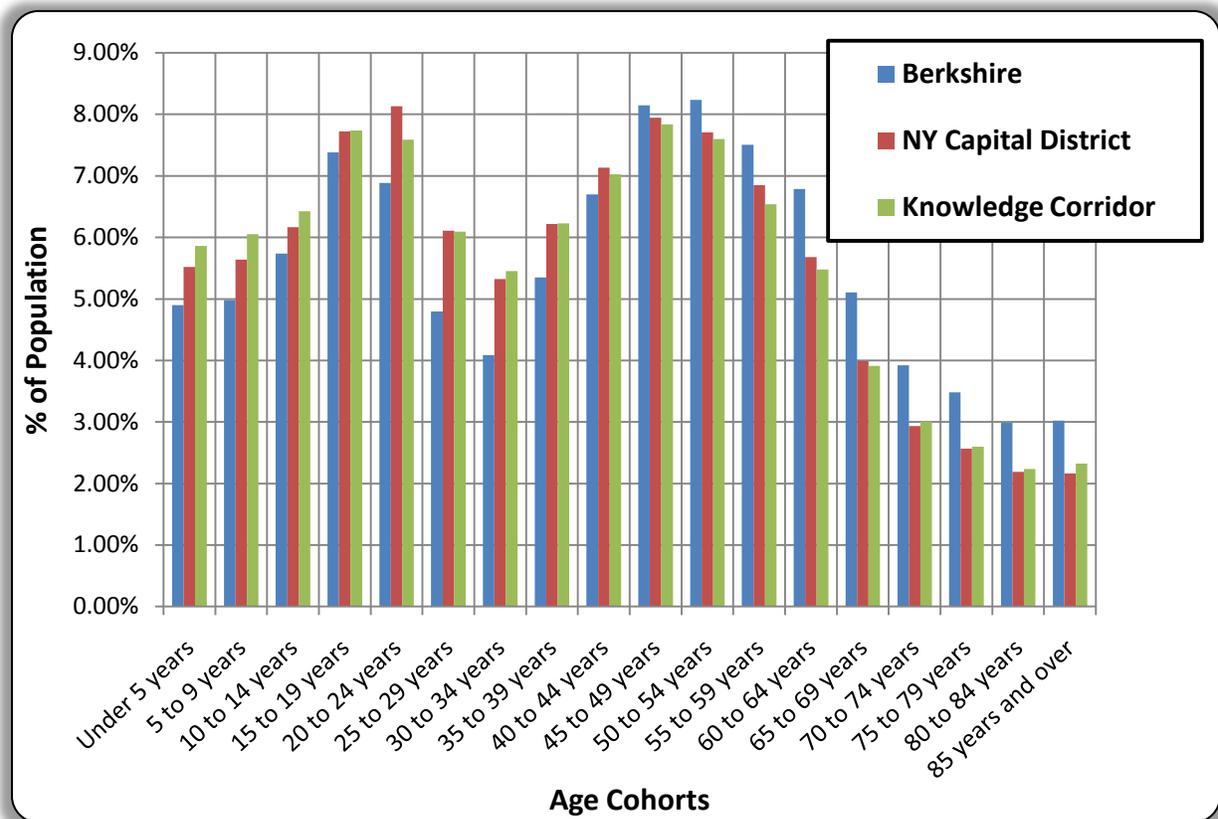


Source: U.S. Census Bureau Census Population Estimates 2009

The second important trend is the presence of a significantly large age group of older age persons, which includes individuals ranging from 45-64 years of age. This age group is predominantly composed of the commonly known “Baby Boom Generation” (born from 1946 to 1965). The presence of an aging population and workforce in the region has the potential to cause many challenges and opportunities. The aging populations in the workforce constitute a wealth of institutional knowledge and stability for industries. As this age group reaches retirement age, job vacancies increasingly occur. (However, with the economic downturn in the late 2000’s and rising healthcare costs it is possible that some individuals may consider postponement of retirement for financial or personally stability reasons.)

As the Baby Boomer generation begins to retire, the region may experience difficulties filling those jobs due to the small population of younger working age persons. Increasingly, employers are turning to technology and the younger workforce to offset the losses of the aging workforce. Subsequently, for older workers to continue working they will need to become more flexible in their skill sets and must have access to continuing education/training opportunities to stay competitive. As this age group gets older there is also an increased demand for healthcare and social services. A broader discussion of the impacts relating to increased demand for healthcare and social services will be discussed in later in the *Economic Characteristics* section of this chapter.

Figure 4: A Comparison of Age Cohorts of Regions Adjoining Berkshire County, 2009

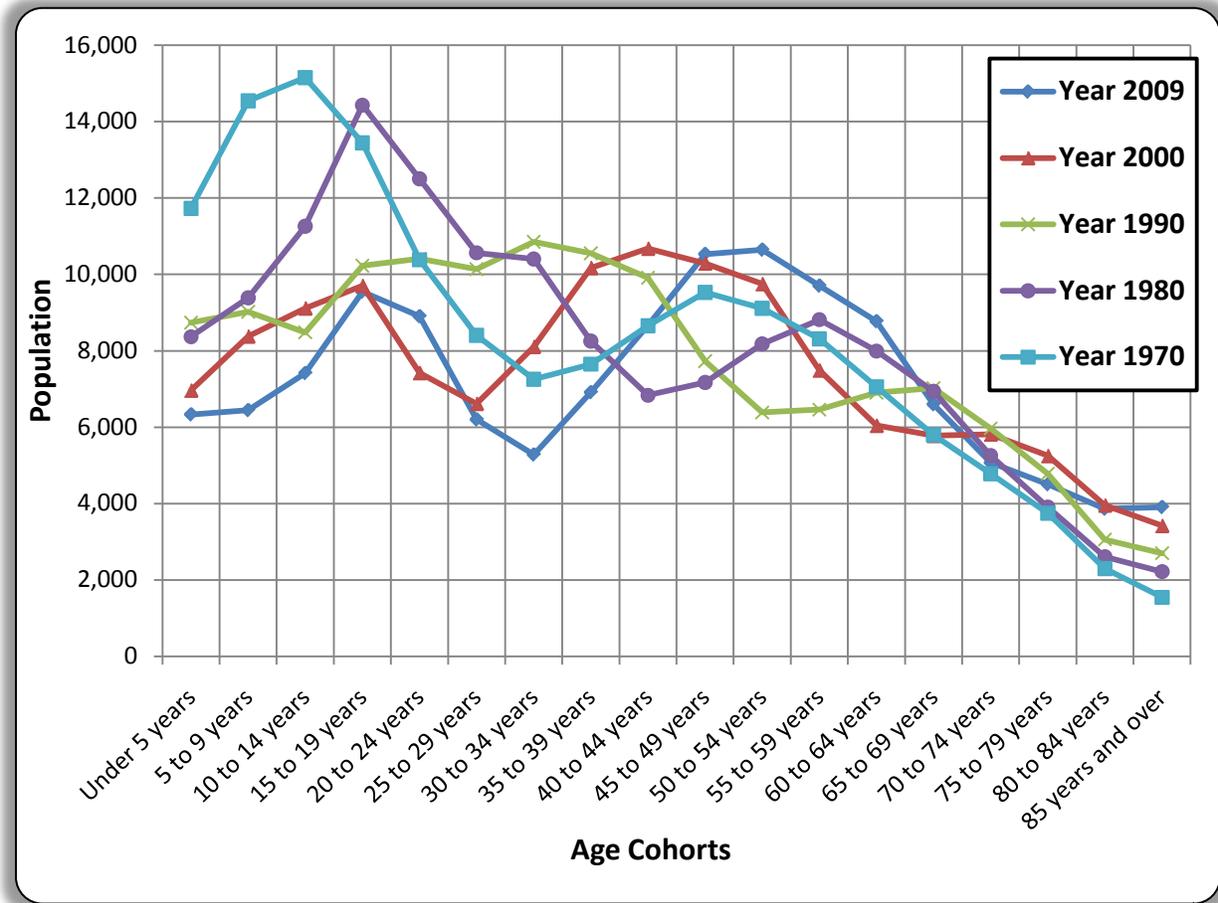


Source: U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates 2009

In a comparison, the population age cohorts for regions adjoining the Berkshires, Figure 4, indicates a number of population similarities and differences. First, the other regions seem to have a related issue of an aging population. However, the Berkshire County age cohorts between the ages of 55 and up represent a higher percentage of the population than in adjoining regions. Conversely, it is also worth noting that the adjacent regions have higher percentages of their populations represented by younger age cohorts than the Berkshires.

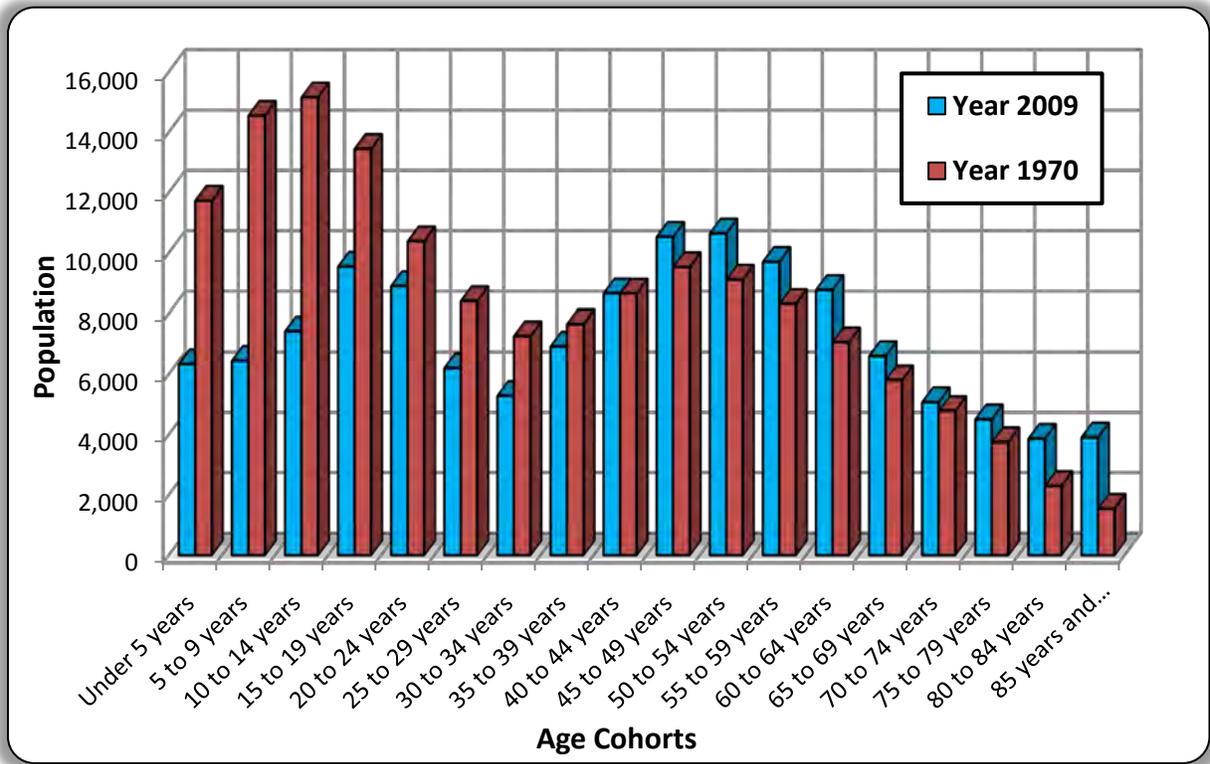
A comparison of the age distribution for Berkshire County’s population from 1970 to 2009, Figure 5, provides a better look at the population shift of the region’s age cohorts discussed earlier in this section. The drastic nature of the population shift is clearly depicted in the figure, *A Comparison of Age Cohorts for Berkshire County, 1970-2009* (Figure 6).

Figure 5: The Trend of Age Cohorts for Berkshire County, 1970-2009



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1970 – 2000 Censuses, 2009 Census Population Estimates

Figure 6: A Comparison of Age Cohorts for Berkshire County, 1970-2009



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1970 Census and Population Estimates 2009

Gender

In 2009, per ACS 2009 estimates displayed in Table 2, there were more females in Berkshire County than males. This was similar to adjacent economic regions, the state and national estimates, in which females typically outnumber males. The table, *A Population by Gender Comparison of Berkshire County, 1970-2009* (Table 3), illustrates a comparison of historic and current population trends by gender for Berkshire County. The Berkshires during the period 1970-2009 didn't experience a significant change in the gender gap. According to the data in Table 3, females have consistently outnumbered males in Berkshire County by an average of 5,711 persons. This supply of females may provide a ready source of employees for the typically female dominated professions that Berkshire County's largest industry sector, Educational Services, Healthcare and Social Assistance industries, represents with 18,355 employees. More information on the county's industry sectors will be discussed in the *Economic Characteristics Section* of this chapter.

Table 2: A Population by Gender Comparison of Berkshire County to Other Areas, 2009

	Berkshire County	Massachusetts	United States	NY Capital District	Knowledge Corridor
Male	48.30%	48.61%	49.33%	48.86%	48.27%
Females	51.70%	51.39%	50.67%	51.14%	51.73%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 American Community Survey

Table 3: A Population by Gender Comparison of Berkshire County, 1970-2009

	2009	2000	1990	1980	1970
Male	62,445	64,547	66,745	69,041	71,995
Female	66,843	70,406	72,607	76,069	77,407

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1970-2000 Censuses, 2009 American Community Survey

Race and Ethnicity

The Census 2000 was the first census to allow respondents to be identified with more than one race; therefore, it is not possible to compare the racial and ethnicity composition data for Berkshire County from 1990 to 2000 census. The data from the Census 2000 is, however, comparable with data gathered during the 2010 Census and ACS.

According to data presented in the *Population by Ethnicity in Berkshire County, 2000 and 2010* table (Table 4), an overwhelming majority of respondents in Berkshire County classified themselves as white in 2000 and 2010 Censuses. During both periods the second and third largest racial groups were Black or African American (2000: 2,679; 2010: 3,572) and Asian (2000: 1,333; 2010: 1,611).

Table 4: Population by Ethnicity in Berkshire County, 2000 and 2010

	2000 Census		2010 Census	
	Actual #	Percent of Population	Actual #	Percent of Population
<i>Total Population</i>	134,953	100%	131,219	100%
White	128,235	95.02%	121,384	92.50%
Black or African American	2,679	1.99%	3,572	2.72%
American Indian and Alaska Native	196	0.15%	251	0.19%
Asian	1,333	0.99%	1,611	1.23%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	49	0.04%	30	0.02%
Some Other Race	796	0.59%	1,557	1.19%
<i>Hispanic or Latino (of any race)</i>	2,286	1.69%	4,530	3.45%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 and 2010 data

Per data from the Census, the *Population by Ethnicity in Berkshire County During 2000 and 2010* (Table 4), the racial makeup of Berkshire County has stayed much the same between the two periods. Between 2000 and 2010, there was a decline of persons from the White Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander racial groups. In contrast, during the same period, all the remaining racial groups experienced an increase in individuals. While the classification of Hispanic or Latino is not a defined racial group, the number of individuals that classified themselves as Hispanic or Latino increased between 2000 and 2010. It is also noteworthy that while the county population has declined since 2000, the majority of that decline is from the white population. On the other hand, the county’s minority population has increased.

As shown in the *Comparison of Population by Ethnicity in Berkshire County to Other Areas, 2010* table (Table 5), the racial diversity of Berkshire County is less than that of the adjacent economic regions, the state and the nation. Comparatively, Berkshire County has less than half the population of persons of the Asian race, of those populated areas examined. While not presented graphically, communities with more diverse populations as a percentage of the overall community include the City of Pittsfield and Town of Williamstown. Conversely, the towns of Clarksburg and Washington have a larger percentage of white persons compared to other communities in Berkshire County.

Table 5: Comparison of Population by Ethnicity of Berkshire County to Other Areas, 2010

	Berkshire County	Massachusetts	United States	NY Capital District	Knowledge Corridor
<i>Total Population</i>	131,219	6,547,629	308,745,538	837,967	1,515,584
White	92.50%	85.98%	78.01%	87.93%	83.31%
Black or African American	2.72%	6.76%	14.94%	7.96%	11.94%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.19%	0.19%	0.89%	0.19%	0.18%
Asian	1.23%	5.99%	5.73%	3.41%	4.29%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.02%	0.03%	0.19%	0.03%	0.03%
Some other race	1.19%	1.06%	0.24%	0.48%	0.26%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	3.45%	10.83%	20.01%	4.47%	19.28%

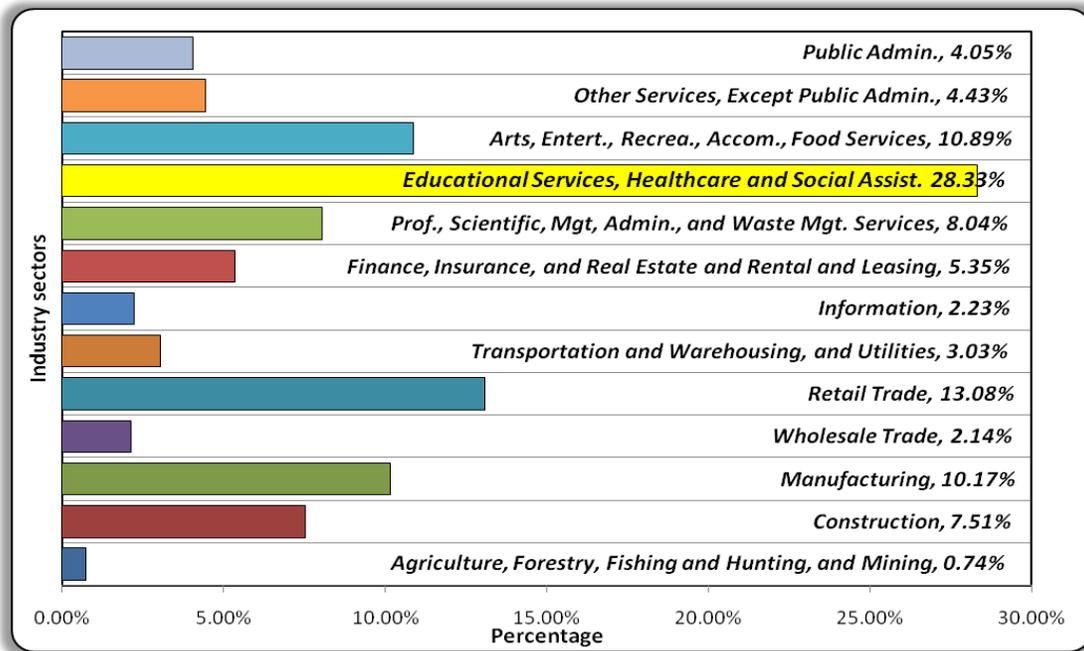
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census

Economic Characteristics

Industry

According to ACS data from 2006-2008, as presented in the *Industry Sectors of Berkshire County* graph (Figure 7), the largest industry sector in Berkshire County is the *Educational Services, Healthcare and Social Assistance* with 28.33% (18,335 persons) of the county’s employment base. The next largest industry sectors are *Retail Trade* with 13.08% (8,462 persons); *Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Service* with 10.89% (7,047 persons); and *Manufacturing* with 10.17% (6,584 persons) of the county’s employment base. Definitions for the industry sector codes, as defined by for the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), can be found in Appendix C.

Figure 7: Industry Sectors of Berkshire County



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2006-2008

The data presented in the *Industry Sector Comparison of Berkshire County to Other Areas* table (Table 6), illustrates how Berkshire County compares to adjacent economic areas, the state and nation. Berkshire County consistently has fewer jobs in most industry sectors that are considered higher paying professions, compared to the New York Capital District and Knowledge Corridor. In the case of the *Educational Services, Healthcare and Social Assistance* industry sector though, Berkshire County has a higher percentage of jobs.

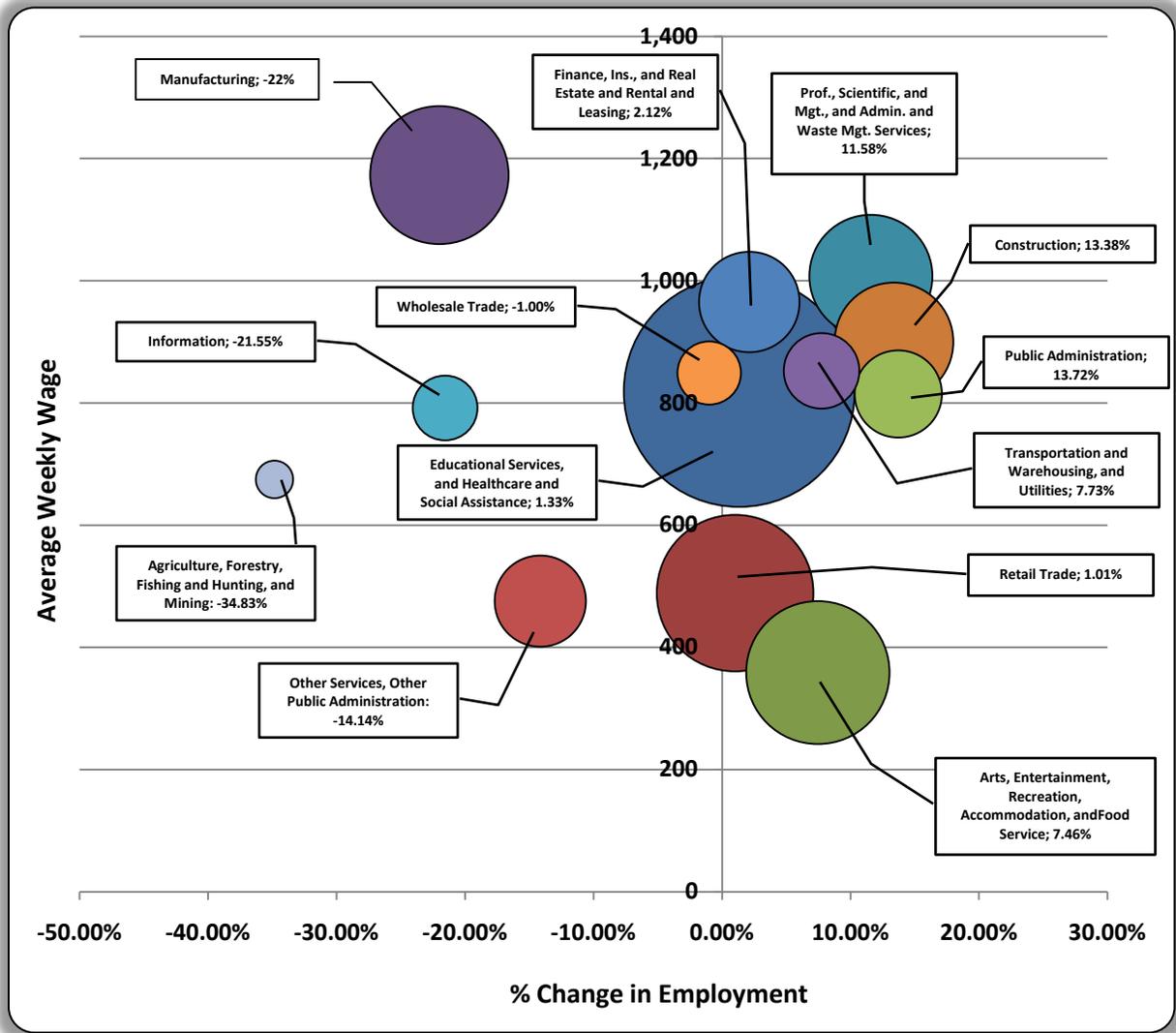
Table 6: Industry Sector Comparison of Berkshire County to Other Areas

Industry Overview <i>(Civilian employed population 16-years and over)</i>	Berkshire County	Massachusetts	United States	NY Capital District	Knowledge Corridor
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, and Mining	0.74%	0.38%	1.83%	0.56%	0.33%
Construction	7.51%	6.32%	7.67%	5.77%	5.27%
Manufacturing	10.17%	10.08%	11.34%	6.85%	12.00%
Wholesale trade	2.14%	2.83%	3.19%	2.49%	3.08%
Retail trade	13.08%	10.80%	11.50%	11.33%	11.07%
Transportation and Warehousing, and Utilities	3.03%	3.82%	5.14%	4.11%	4.29%
Information	2.23%	2.86%	2.46%	2.37%	2.22%
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	5.35%	8.33%	7.12%	7.57%	10.21%
Prof., Scientific, and Mgt., Admin., and Waste Mgt. Services	8.04%	12.57%	10.27%	9.78%	8.86%
Educational Services, Healthcare and Social Assistance	28.33%	25.70%	21.27%	25.89%	26.47%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services	10.89%	7.94%	8.71%	7.70%	7.57%
Other Services, except Public Administration	4.43%	4.42%	4.81%	4.27%	4.39%
Public Administration	4.05%	3.95%	4.69%	11.31%	4.24%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2006-2008

The data from the Census 2000 and the ACS 2006-2008, was modeled to compare shifts in economic industries from 2000 to 2009 (shown on Figure 8), *Comparison of Industry Sectors in Berkshire County, 2000 and 2008* graph. The largest change to the county's industrial sectors occurred in the *Agriculture, Forestry and Hunting, and Mining* sector, which lost -34.83% of its employment base, during the examined time period. The next largest industry to lose employment base was that of the *Manufacturing* sector at -22%. Although the *Agriculture, Forestry and Hunting, and Mining* sector has been in steady decline for years, the relatively large drop in the *Manufacturing* sector could be the result of the recent increase in mill closures county-wide. Not only has this affected the region's economic stability; but for the Town of Lee, whose population was 5,738 in 2009, the recent closure of the Columbia, Eagle, Greylock, Laurel, and Niagara Mills has posed a large threat to the stability of the community. Of the other economic industry sectors examined, there were modest increases in the *Public Administration*; *Professional, Scientific, and Management, and Administrative and Waste Management Services*; and *Construction* industry sectors. These humble increases may be attributed to the recent regional initiatives of the Berkshire Economic Development Corporation (2005 inception) and the Berkshire Creative (2007 inception) in their achievements and efforts to grow the creative and skilled workforce of the region.

Figure 8: Comparison of Industry Sectors in Berkshire County, 2000 and 2008



The size of the circle represents the percentage of overall jobs.
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 and American Community Survey 2006-2008

The *Major Employers in Berkshire County by Employment* table (Table 7) provides a look at some of the major employers and their corresponding employment numbers. Given that the *Educational Services, Healthcare and Social Assistance* industry sector is the largest industry sector in the Berkshires, according to data presented in Figures 8 and 9, it isn't surprising to see institutions like Berkshire Health Systems, Williams College and Pittsfield Public School District among the larger employers.

Table 7: Major Employers in Berkshire County by Employment

Business/Company Name	Location	NAICS Industry Sector	Employee Size
Berkshire Health Systems	Regional	Educational Services, Healthcare and Social Assist.	3,089
Pittsfield Public School District	City of Pittsfield	Educational Services, Healthcare and Social Assist.	1,563
General Dynamic Advanced Information Systems	City of Pittsfield	Prof., Scientific, Mgt, Admin., and Waste Mgt. Services	1067
Williams College	Town of Williamstown	Educational Services, Healthcare and Social Assist.	1044
Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort	Town of Hancock	Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services	1000**
Crane & Company	Town of Dalton	Manufacturing	800
Canyon Ranch in Lenox	Town of Lenox	Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services	525**

** Includes Part-time or Seasonal Employees

Employment numbers are as of February 2011 and represent employers with >500 employees. These numbers may be subject to change.

Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and United Way

The Table 8, *Industry Sectors vs. Employment for Berkshire County, 2009* table (Table 8) provides a comparison of industry sector data including the number of establishments, average monthly employment and average weekly wages. According to data presented in Table 7, there is a large gap between the different industry sectors of Berkshire County’s economy. This is most apparent in a comparison of the *Accommodation and Food Services* and *Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation* industries with the *Manufacturing* industry. The *Accommodation and Food Services* industry represents 489 establishments, is the third largest employer with 6,488 persons and paid their employees an average of \$333.00 a week. The *Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation* industry has 109 establishments with 1,870 employees and paid their employees an average of \$453.00 a week. As a stark contrast, the *Manufacturing* industry with 171 establishments employing 4,910 persons paid their employees an average of \$1,173.00 a week. While the growth of such industries like leisure and service show overall job gain there is a trickle down affect on median household incomes; generally lowering those levels from manufacturing jobs. A closer look at the status of the Berkshire County’s median household income will be discussed later in the *Labor Force and Employment* section of this chapter.

Table 8: Industry Sectors vs. Employment for Berkshire County, 2009

Description <i>(Includes North American Industry Classification System code and industry name)</i>	Berkshire County		
	No. of Establishments	Average Monthly Employment	Average Weekly Wages
<i>Total, All Industries</i>	4,816	60,540	\$743.00
11 - Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	29	177	\$432.00
21 - Mining	8	108	\$1,073.00
23 - Construction	596	2,956	\$900.00
31-33 - Manufacturing	171	4,910	\$1,173.00
Durable Goods Manufacturing	99	1,798	\$1,062.00
Non-Durable Goods Manufacturing	72	3,112	\$1,238.00
22 - Utilities	14	313	\$1,466.00
42 - Wholesale Trade	128	902	\$849.00
44-45 - Retail Trade	692	8,469	\$489.00
48-49 - Transportation and Warehousing	98	1,119	\$681.00
51 - Information	89	1,014	\$792.00
52 - Finance and Insurance	166	2,042	\$1,074.00
53 - Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	140	624	\$609.00
54 - Professional and Technical Services	354	2,575	\$1,223.00
55 - Management of Companies and Enterprises	15	222	\$1,515.00
56 - Administrative and Waste Services	250	2,082	\$687.00
61 - Educational Services	92	7,352	\$797.00
62 - Health Care and Social Assistance	398	11,453	\$833.00
71 - Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	109	1,870	\$453.00
72 - Accommodation and Food Services	489	6,844	\$333.00
81 - Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	821	3,068	\$476.00
92 - Public Administration	157	2,440	\$815.00

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

The agriculture industry is an under-recognized part of the Berkshire County's economy. While its economic effect in the Berkshires may not be as significant in comparison to adjacent economic regions, it is important to note that Berkshire County has the 3rd largest agricultural sector in the state. The *Comparison of the Agricultural Industry Sector* table (Table 9), shows that in Berkshire County there are a large percentage of farms that are operated as a primary source of income in comparison to the state. This is interesting, since Berkshire County has a relatively smaller amount of acreage dedicated to farming than other areas of the state. Table 8 also indicates a smaller market value of agricultural products sold in the Berkshires compared to the adjacent economic regions, which may be the result of the recently ended Northeast Dairy Compact or that farmers are producing products for consumption (i.e. a hobby farm) rather than profit.

Table 9: Comparison of the Agricultural Industry Sector

	Berkshire County	Massachusetts	United States	NY Capital District	Knowledge Corridor
<i>Farms</i>	522	7,691	2,204,792	1,837	2,009
Land in Farms (<i>acres</i>)	66,352	517,879	9,222,095,840	240,853	145,101
Average Size of Farm (<i>acres</i>)	127	67	418	131	72
Total Cropland (<i>acres</i>)	22,574	187,406	406,424,909	130,674	66,401
% Farming Primary Occupation	48.66%	47.95%	45.08%	50.79%	47.88%
Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold (<i>average per farm</i>)	\$39,465.00	\$63,687.00	\$134,807.00	\$66,221.00	\$98,524.00

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Census 2007

Another underrepresented component of the region's economy is self-employed workers. Per data from the ACS, Table 10, 8.42% of Berkshire County's workers are self-employed workers. Compared to adjacent economic areas, the state and national, Berkshire County has a higher percentage of self-employed workers.

Table 10: Class of Worker in Berkshire County

	Berkshire County	Massachusetts	United States	NY Capital District	Knowledge Corridor
Civilian Employed (<i>population 16 years and over</i>)	64,715	3,314,211	143,195,793	420,426	734,420
Private Wage and Salary Workers	78.31%	80.52%	78.70%	71.29%	78.94%
Government Workers	13.17%	12.80%	14.46%	23.09%	15.14%
Self-Employed Workers (<i>in own not incorporated business</i>)	8.42%	6.54%	6.63%	5.45%	5.72%

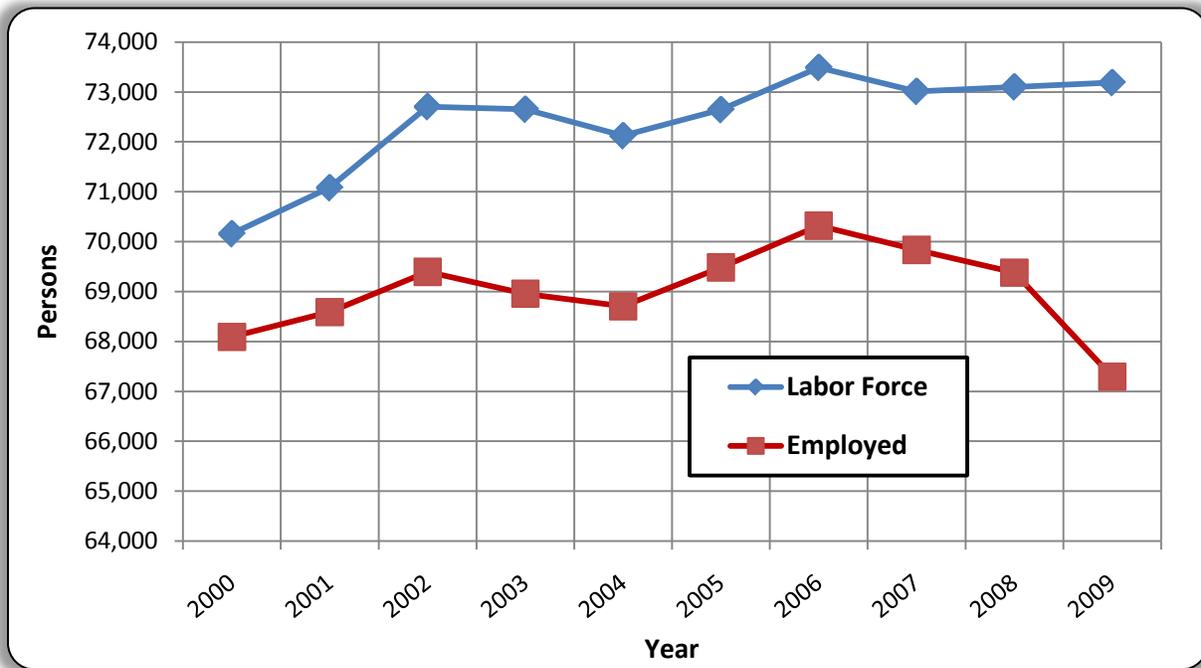
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2006-2008

Labor Force and Employment

According to the U.S. Census Bureau and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), the labor force is defined as persons who are 16 years of age and over, and are either employed or who are actively seeking employment. The unemployment rate describes the number of persons in the Labor Force that are actively seeking employment during a given period of time.

The data presented in the *Labor Force and Employed Worker Trends for Berkshire County, 2000-2009* graph (Figure 9), from EOLWD, illustrates how employment in the Berkshires over the past ten years has been fairly stable, between 70,000 and 74,000 workers. A comparison of these number of people in the labor force and the number of people employed shows a consistent pattern, until about 2007, with about 3000 – 4000 potential workers not employed. In 2006, however, the gap between the number of available worker and those employed increased substantially. Much like the rest of the nation, the employment downturn shown for the 2006-2009 period is most likely due to the economic recession.

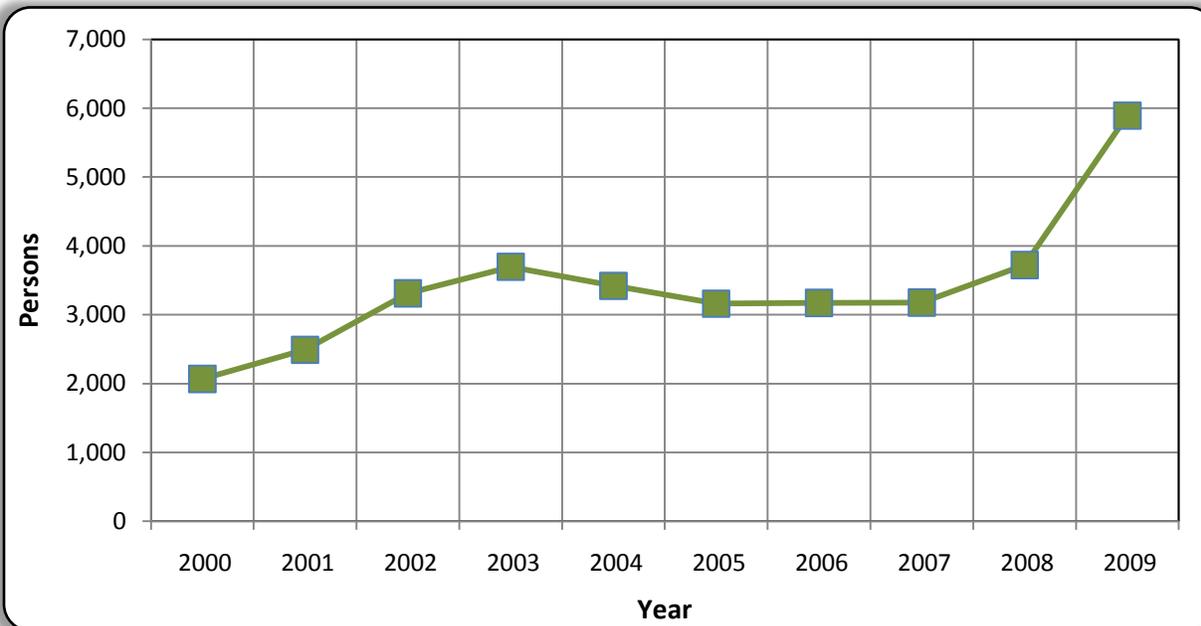
Figure 9: Labor Force and Employed Worker Trends for Berkshire County, 2000-2009



Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, 2009

The *Unemployment Trends for Berkshire County, 2000-2009* graph (Figure 10) depicts the unemployment trend for Berkshire County between the years of 2000 through 2009. As shown, there was a gradual trend of increased unemployment until 2004 when unemployment numbers stabilized, but then in 2007 the number of unemployed individuals begins to rise sharply. As mentioned above, this is most likely the result of the economic recession nationally and the closure or downsizing of business regionally.

Figure 10: Unemployment Trends for Berkshire County, 2000-2009



Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, 2009

To better understand the data presented in Figures 9 and 10, the *Workforce Data as a Proportion of the Working Age Population in Berkshire County, 2000-2009* table (Table 11) provides percentages of the workforce as a proportion of the working age population in Berkshire County. The proportions of the working age population in Berkshire County have been fairly stable until 2009. In 2009, the unemployed portion of the working age population increased just over 3% and the employed portion of the working age population shrank almost 5%. As stated previously, this change is most like the result of the economic recession.

Table 11: Workforce Data as a Proportion of the Working Age Population in Berkshire County, 2000-2009

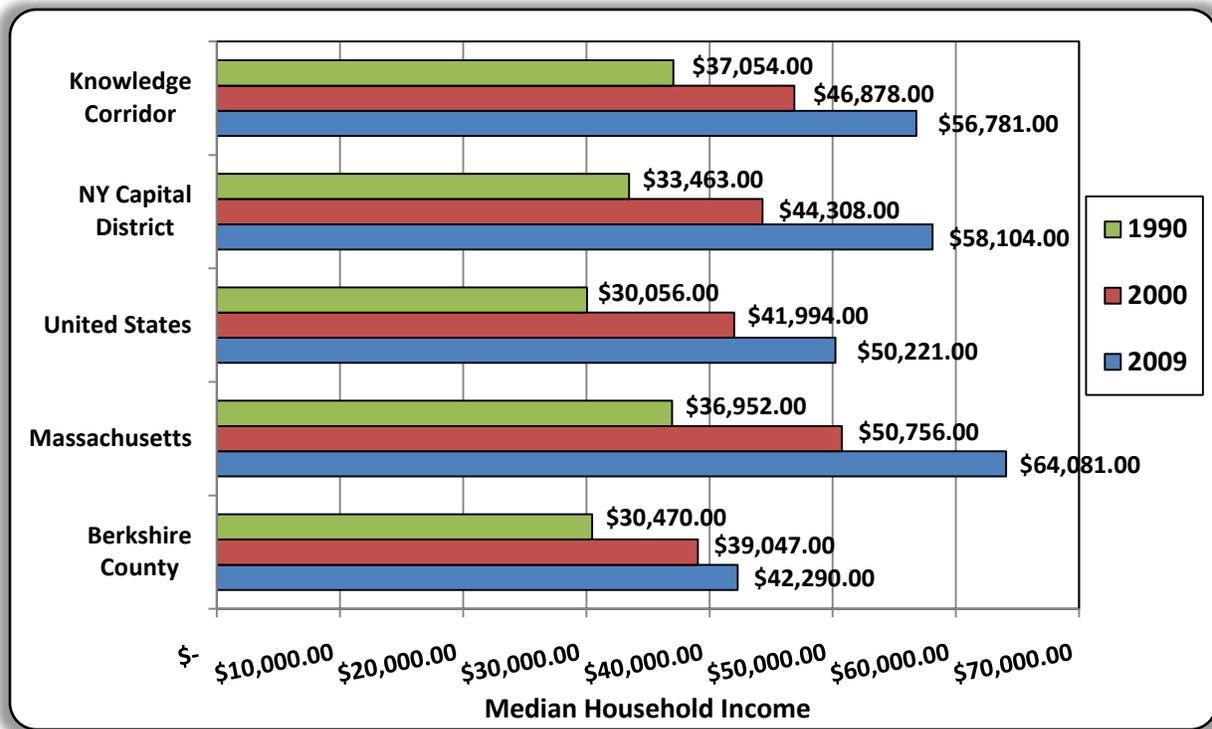
Year	Working Age (16+)	Labor Force	Not in Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed
2009	105,911	62.4%	37.5%	55.5%	7.0%
2008	108,259	64.2%	35.8%	60.5%	3.7%
2007	108,394	62.8%	37.2%	58.6%	4.2%
2006	109,193	64.5%	35.5%	61.4%	3.1%
2000	108,466	63.4%	36.6%	60.2%	3.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2000-2009

According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the median household income for Berkshire County has steadily increased over the past 20 years. In the last 10 years, however, the rate of increase has slowed from 21.96% between 1990 and 2000 to 7.76% between 2000 and 2009. The result of this change could be attributed to a number of economic influences, but specifically can be associated with the reduced wages of employees that was discussed earlier in the *Industry* section of this chapter.

A Comparison of Berkshire County's Median Household Income graph (Figure 11), contrasts the median household income of Berkshire County with that of the adjacent economic regions, the state and the nation. As indicated in this graph, the areas Berkshire County was compared against all experienced similar rates of increased income in the 1990's. The adjacent economic areas all sustained the rate of income increases into the 2000's; while Berkshire County underwent a much slower rate of income increase and between 2000. In 2009, incomes had only risen by 8% in Berkshire County. This may be connected to the shift of industry sectors, discussed Figure 9.

Figure 11: A Comparison of Median Household Income



Source: 1990 US Census, 2000 US Census, 2009 American Community Survey

Since the ACS does not provide median household income data at the community level, unless the populated area is 20,000 persons or greater; data from the Census 2000 was used to show the stratification of median household incomes for communities throughout the county. According to the *Comparison of Median Household Income for the Communities of Berkshire County, 2000* table (Table 12), the Town of Richmond had the highest median household income at \$60,917 were as the City of North Adams had the lowest median household income at \$27,601. The county average for median household income for this period was \$39,047.

Table 12: Comparison of Median Household Income for the Communities of Berkshire County, 1999

Municipality	Median Household Income in 1999
Adams	\$32,161
Alford	\$49,632
Becket	\$46,806
Cheshire	\$41,981
Clarksburg	\$43,362
Dalton	\$47,891
Egremont	\$50,000
Florida	\$43,000
Great Barrington	\$45,490
Hancock	\$45,347
Hinsdale	\$42,500
Lanesborough	\$46,496
Lee	\$41,556
Lenox	\$45,581
Monterey	\$49,750
Mount Washington	\$53,125
New Ashford	\$51,250
New Marlborough	\$46,875
North Adams	\$27,601
Otis	\$51,488
Peru	\$44,531
Pittsfield	\$35,655
Richmond	\$60,917
Sandisfield	\$45,972
Savoy	\$41,477
Sheffield	\$45,082
Stockbridge	\$48,571
Tyringham	\$60,250
Washington	\$54,583
West Stockbridge	\$51,000
Williamstown	\$51,875
Windsor	\$51,389
<i>Berkshire County</i>	<i>\$39,047</i>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

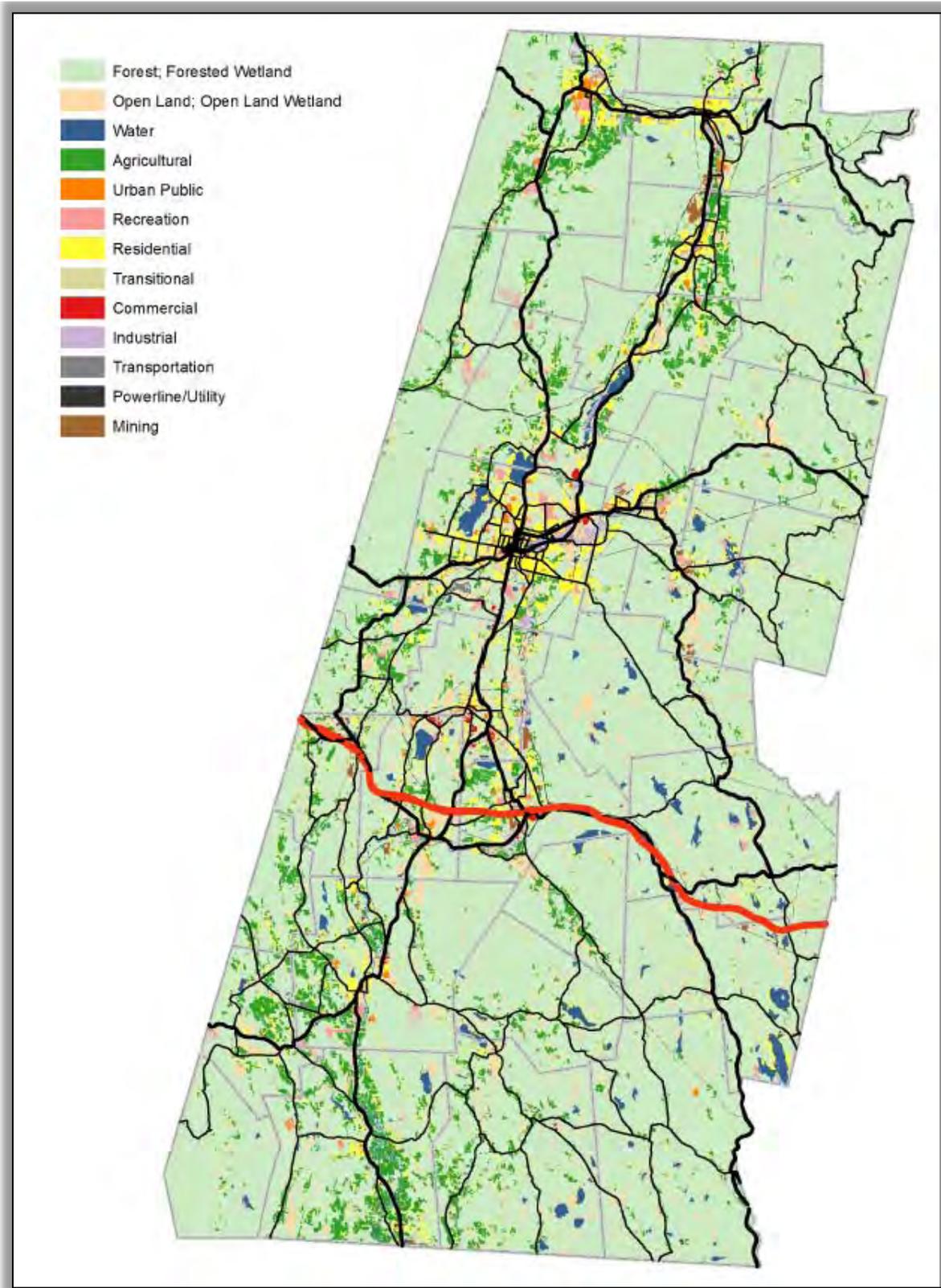
Environmental/Geographical Characteristics

Land Component

As mentioned in the *Berkshire Snapshot of the Region* section of this chapter, Berkshire County lies in the western most region of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The county consists of 605,400 acres or 946 square miles of landmass and includes 32 municipalities. In addition to its rich cultural, economic and historic assets the county holds a wealth of natural resources and physical features such as: fertile farmland, wetlands, rivers, lakes, and majestic vistas that are dominated by the Taconic Mountain Range (to the west) and the Berkshire Hills (to the east). All together those features make the Berkshires one of a kind. The *Land Uses of Berkshire County* map (Map 2), provides a clear depiction of the county's diverse and intricate composition of land uses.

In Berkshire County, there are 16,639 acres of commercial or industrial zoned lands. Of these commercial or industrial zoned lands, 5,483 acres are developed, while 11,156 acres are undeveloped. However, much of the undeveloped acreage is constrained and not buildable due to factors such as the presence of wetlands, floodplains, steepness of slope and other limiting factors.

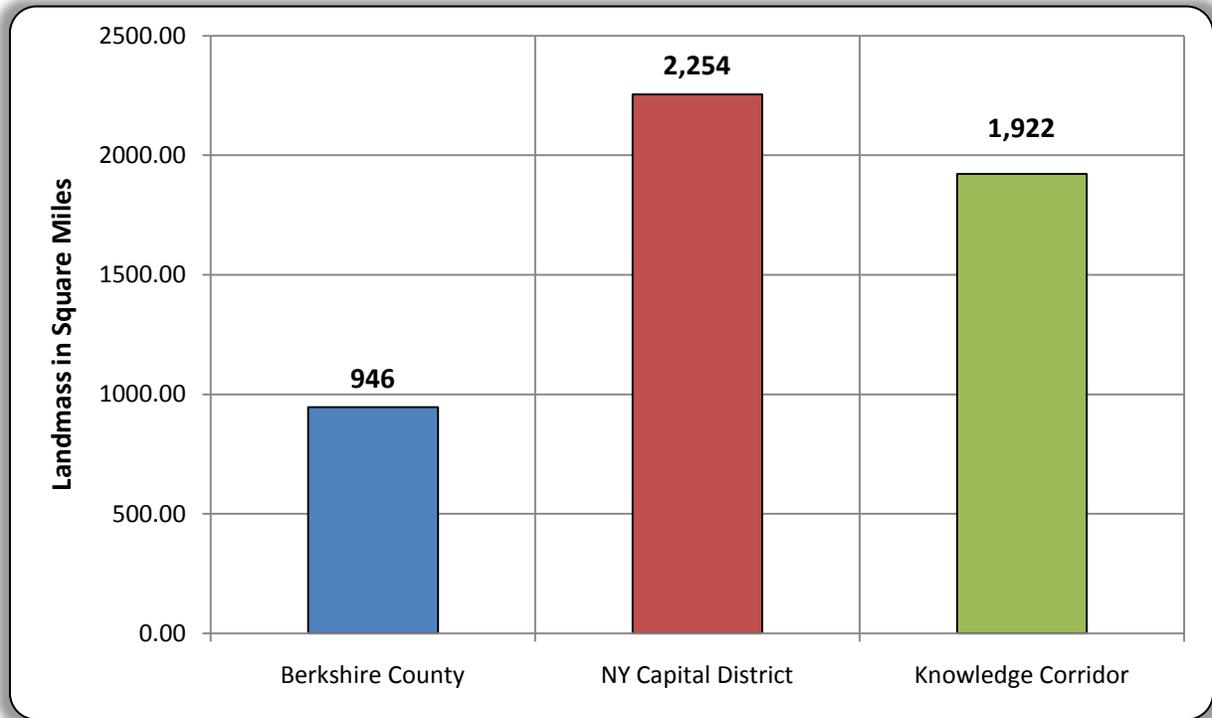
Map 2: Land Uses of Berkshire County, 2005



Source: Massachusetts Office of Geographic Information, Land Use Datalayer 2005

While Berkshire County is almost half the size of its adjacent economic regions, as depicted in *Comparison of Landmass by Economic Regions* graph (Figure 12), it continues to provide a well-balanced mixture of land uses: development vs. open space; residential vs. commercial; and bucolic farmland vs. modern industries. To meet current development needs to develop on flat open land; however, Berkshire County has a limited supply. This could inhibit future growth. Alternatively, the potential for infill and mixed-use developments within previously developed areas exists is an opportunity which may allow businesses and industries to reduce start-up costs and to become intricate components to the region's communities as well as the economy.

Figure 12: Comparison of Landmass by Economic Region



Source: US Census 2000 Geography

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Census of Agriculture, Berkshire County is ranked in the top three counties for agriculture production in the state. In the *Comparison of Agricultural Land* table (Table 13), it was determined that Berkshire County has a relatively small number of farms in comparison with adjacent economic regions, the state and the nation. The farms that it does have are comparatively larger, with the average farm size 127 acres, than those areas.

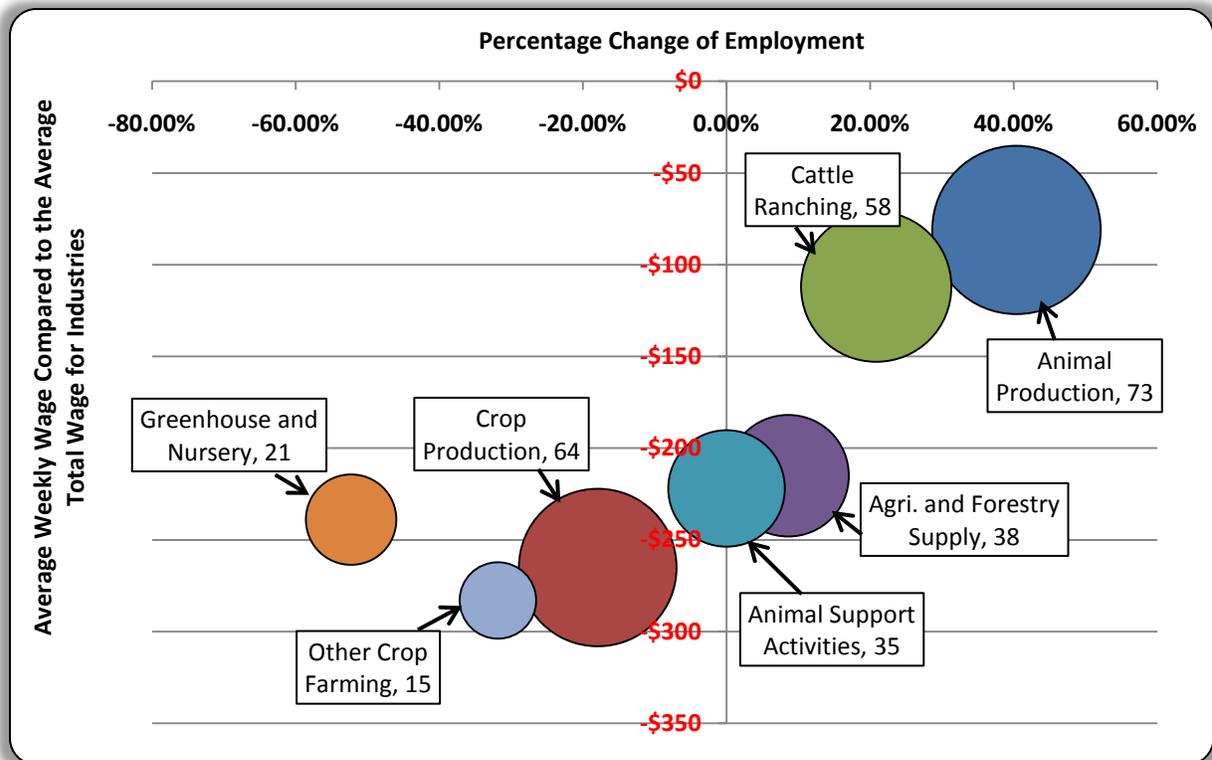
Table 13: Comparison of Agricultural Land

	Berkshire County	Massachusetts	United States	NY Capital District	Knowledge Corridor
Farms	522	7,691	2,204,792	1,837	2,009
Land in Farms (acres)	66,352	517,879	9,222,095,840	240,853	145,101
Average Size of Farm	127	67	418	131	72
Farm Size 1-9 Acres	79	2,199	232,849	236	508
Farm Size 10-49 Acres	181	2,885	620,283	570	721
Farm Size 50-179 Acres	160	1,903	660,530	664	578
Farm Size 180-499 Acres	77	586	368,368	285	172
Farm Size 500 - 999 Acres	17	90	149,713	57	26
Farm Size 1,000 Acres or More	8	28	173,049	27	4
Total Cropland (acres)	22,574	187,406	406,424,909	130,674	66,401

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Census 2007

In Figure 13, the agriculture industry sectors of Berkshire County were analyzed by type of product to determine the County’s market value of agricultural products being produced. The figure indicates a shift from crop production to the raising of livestock, which accounts for 60% of the agricultural production in the Berkshires, is occurring. A correlation to the shift noted above, the average weekly wage for farms raising livestock has increased compared to that of the other types of products being produced in the agricultural industry sector (i.e. crop production, greenhouse and nursery, other crop farms, etc.).

Figure 13: Shift of Agriculture Industry in Berkshire County, 2001-2009



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Census 2007

Governmental Characteristics

Local

Berkshire County consists of 32 municipalities, of which two are cities (North Adams and Pittsfield) and thirty towns. The two cities are comprised of a mayor and city council system of government. In the City of North Adams, all nine councilors are at-large elected members. In the City of Pittsfield, four councilors are at-large members and seven are elected from the wards. Both city councils meet twice a month to conduct city business, with committee meetings as needed.

The thirty towns are governed by Boards of Selectmen (or Select Boards), usually consisting of three members except in the case of the Select Boards in the Towns of Adams, Dalton, Great Barrington, Lenox and Williamstown which have five members. The Select Boards generally meet weekly or bi-weekly to conduct the towns business; yet each town's Select Board has the authority to schedule additional or special meetings during a month. Some towns have either a Town Administrator or Town Manager whom oversees the daily municipal business and operations on behalf of the Select Board. Those communities include: Adams, Becket, Cheshire, Clarksburg, Dalton, Florida, Great Barrington, Hinsdale, Lanesborough, Lee, Lenox, Otis, Richmond, Sheffield, Stockbridge, West Stockbridge and Williamstown. Generally held in May, a town meeting is held to decide upon major budgetary and other policies. In all but two of Berkshire County's towns, all registered voters are eligible to participate and vote at annual (or special) town meetings. In the Towns of Adams and Lee, representatives are elected to participate and vote in the town meeting. In accordance with state laws, all board meetings and town meetings are required to give public notice and are open to the public.

Regional

Like most of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' counties, Berkshire County currently exists as a geographic region and has no county government. The state legislation terminating regional governance throughout Massachusetts was approved in the late 1990's. For Berkshire County the regional government was officially dissolved on June 30, 2000, when most county functions were assumed by state agencies.

While state agencies have been established to facilitate state programs and initiatives to the regional and local communities, there were other services and functions now being administered by municipalities in the region under cooperative agreements. As a result of the cooperative agreements a network of regional nonprofit organizations were established to aid regional efforts and local municipalities through state-wide efforts, initiatives and programs; ensure there is an open forum of discussion; provide technical assistance when needed; help to further regionally based initiatives; and are committed to protecting the county's natural resources while advancing and providing for human needs.

State

Berkshire County has representation in the State Legislature (or General Court) by one senator (Senator Benjamin Downing) and four state representatives (Representatives William "Smitty" Pignatelli, Christopher Speranzo, Paul Mark and Gailanne Cariddi). The Senate District, along with House District 2, includes communities in Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden Counties. The remaining districts lie completely within Berkshire County.

Federal

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has representation in the U.S. House and U.S. Senate. In the U.S. Senate, Massachusetts is represented by John F. Kerry and Scott P. Brown. The U.S. House representative from the 1st Congressional District is John W. Olver.

Regulation

Massachusetts is a “home-rule” state. According to State law, cities and towns are responsible for overseeing compliance of a host of regulatory and/or advisory functions: land use and zoning, environmental and historic protection, and health provisions, for example. The Massachusetts General Laws specify schedules and actions which must be adhered to by the local regulatory or advisory boards during project review, permitting and development. However, each community through its local control can set and interpret its own standards (within parameters).

There is the potential that economic development activities in the region may be subject to 32 differing sets of rules. In the instance of a development project, those rules can control where, how much, and what kind of activities are allowed, and prescribe operational restrictions, amongst other conditions and requirements. The lack of clarity or consistency in regulations and zoning among communities is a significant barrier to regional economic development and siting of projects.

Taxation

The taxation structure in Berkshire County consists of a locally established tax rate. As previously mentioned, there is not a county level government; therefore there are no regional (county) taxes. As presented in the *Property Mill Rates for Berkshire County Communities, 2010* table (Table 14), each community has implemented different levels of taxation; although each must comply with state and federal tax laws. In Berkshire County, the average municipal residential mill rate is 10.04. At that rate, the average single family’s property tax bill is \$2,790.53. The community with the lowest residential mill rate in the county is the Town of Hancock at 3.48. In contrast, the Town of Lanesborough has the highest residential mill rate at 16.30.

In 5 of the 32 communities in the county, the communities set separate rates for residential and commercial/industrial mill rates. Those communities’ commercial/industrial mill rates are Adams (18.19), Florida (23.31), Lenox (13.50), New Ashford (11.53), North Adams (27.92), and Pittsfield (29.41). Generally, the rates for commercial properties in Berkshire County have been considerably lower than those of adjacent economic regions and the state.

Table 14: Property Mill Rates for Berkshire County Communities, 2010

Municipality	Average Residential Value	Residential Mill Rate	Average Single Family Tax Bill	Commercial / Industrial Mill Rate
Adams	\$141,746.00	15.33	\$2,173.00	18.19
Alford	\$652,551.00	4.50	\$2,936.00	4.50
Becket	\$255,277.00	7.95	\$2,029.00	7.95
Cheshire	\$209,708.00	9.33	\$1,957.00	9.33
Clarksburg	\$170,002.00	10.10	\$1,717.00	10.10
Dalton	\$213,020.00	15.80	\$3,366.00	15.80
Egremont	\$435,307.00	6.94	\$3,021.00	6.94
Florida	\$159,507.00	8.00	\$1,276.00	23.31
Great Barrington	\$406,276.00	11.52	\$4,680.00	11.52
Hancock	\$236,890.00	3.48	\$824.00	3.48
Hinsdale	\$224,301.00	11.13	\$2,496.00	11.13
Lanesborough	\$213,094.00	16.30	\$3,473.00	16.30
Lee	\$252,971.00	12.61	\$3,190.00	12.61
Lenox	\$410,607.00	9.92	\$4,073.00	13.50
Monterey	\$519,005.00	5.35	\$2,777.00	5.35
Mount Washington	\$321,116.00	6.63	\$2,129.00	6.63
New Ashford	\$259,425.00	6.84	\$1,774.00	11.53
New Marlborough	\$388,571.00	7.67	\$2,980.00	7.67
North Adams	\$138,963.00	12.44	\$1,729.00	27.92
Otis	\$319,539.00	6.33	\$2,023.00	6.33
Peru	\$177,624.00	15.33	\$2,723.00	15.33
Pittsfield	\$187,519.00	14.20	\$2,663.00	29.41
Richmond	\$439,569.00	8.92	\$3,921.00	8.92
Sandisfield	\$278,230.00	8.63	\$2,401.00	8.63
Savoy	\$158,982.00	15.89	\$2,526.00	15.89
Sheffield	\$318,923.00	12.22	\$3,897.00	12.22
Stockbridge	\$514,281.00	6.99	\$3,595.00	6.99
Tyringham	\$513,092.00	5.72	\$2,935.00	5.72
Washington	\$209,413.00	12.42	\$2,601.00	12.42
West Stockbridge	\$469,540.00	9.40	\$4,414.00	9.40
Williamstown	\$385,009.00	12.30	\$4,736.00	12.30
Windsor	\$203,453.00	11.12	\$2,262.00	11.12
Berkshire County Average	\$287,345.28	10.04	\$2,790.53	20.64

Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services - Municipal Databank/Local Aid Section, 2010

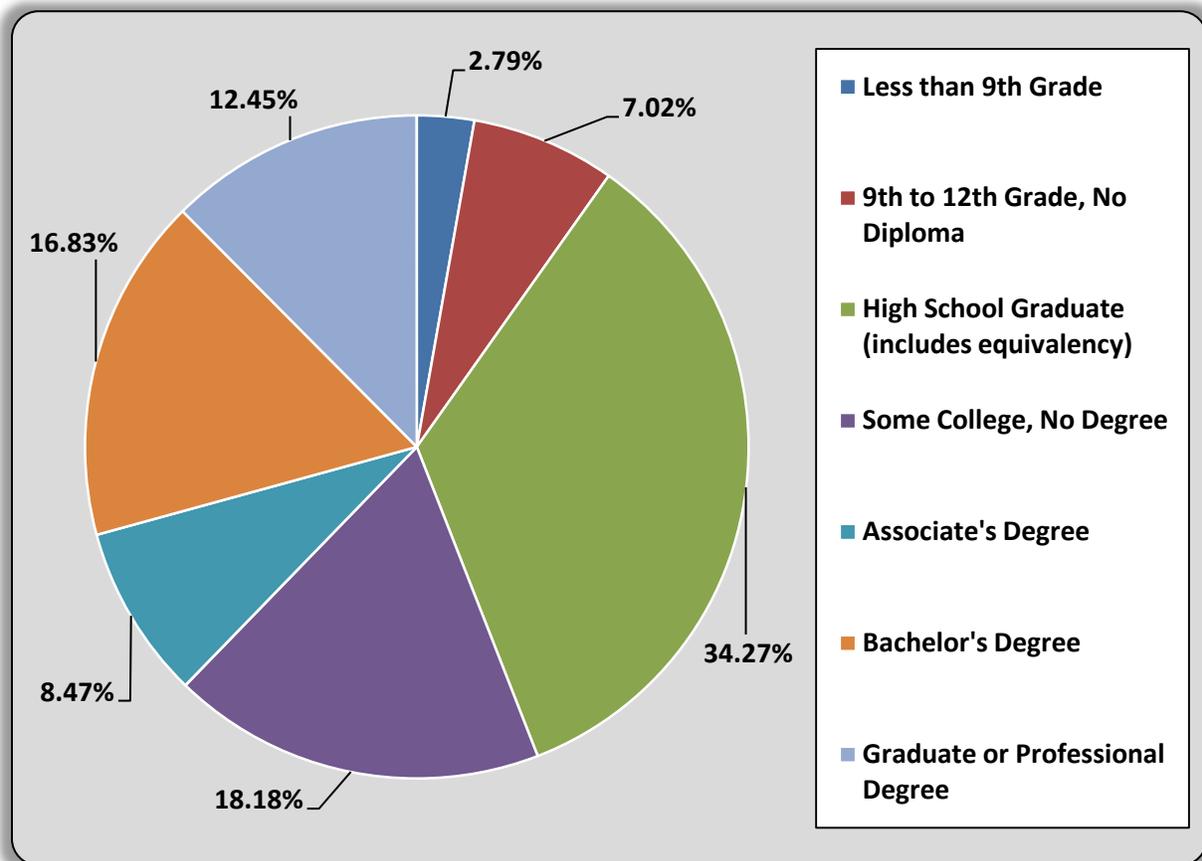
Social Characteristics

Educational Component

In Berkshire County there is a strong base of educational opportunities that range from K-12 to graduate or professional degrees. The K-12 education system is provided at the municipal level through community based school districts or regional school districts, for more rural areas. The higher education opportunities include Williams College, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Simon's Rock College of Bard and Berkshire Community College. These institutions provide a wide array of opportunities to individuals pursuing continuing education from around the country and world, as well as locally.

Educational attainment levels and dropout rates for a given area are commonly accepted indicators of an area's ability to provide well educated and skill labor. Education attainment is the level at which a person, defined as an individual of 25-years of age or older, achieves a certain level of education or skills from a recognized institution of learning. In Berkshire County, as shown on the *Highest Education Attainment for Persons of Berkshire County* graph (Figure 14), 34.27% of the population has at least a high school graduate level education. Less than 10% of the county's population has not completed their high school education or equivalence.

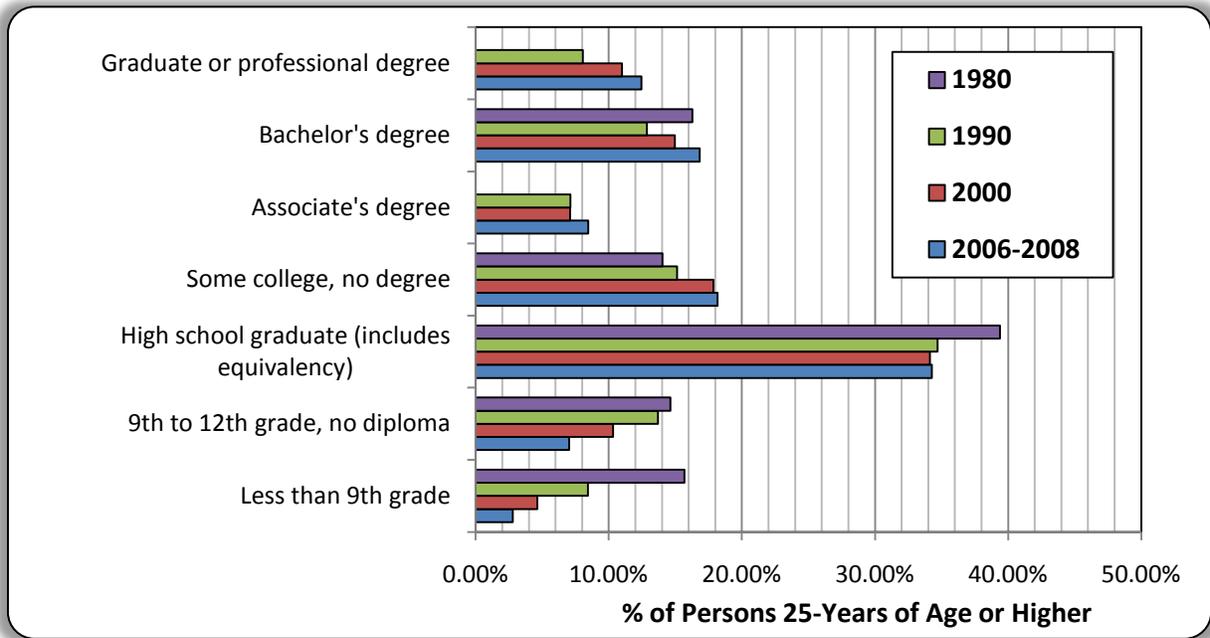
Figure 14: Highest Education Attainment for Persons of Berkshire County



Source: US Census American Community Survey 2006-2008

As shown on the *Education Attainment Trend for Berkshire County* graph (Figure 15), the trend of educational attainment and success has gradually risen from the 1980's to 2008. This is exemplified in the fact that more individuals were high school graduates or higher in the 2006-2008 (90.19%) than compared to 1980 (69.70%). There was also an increase (12.99%) in individuals with a bachelors degree or higher during the same time period.

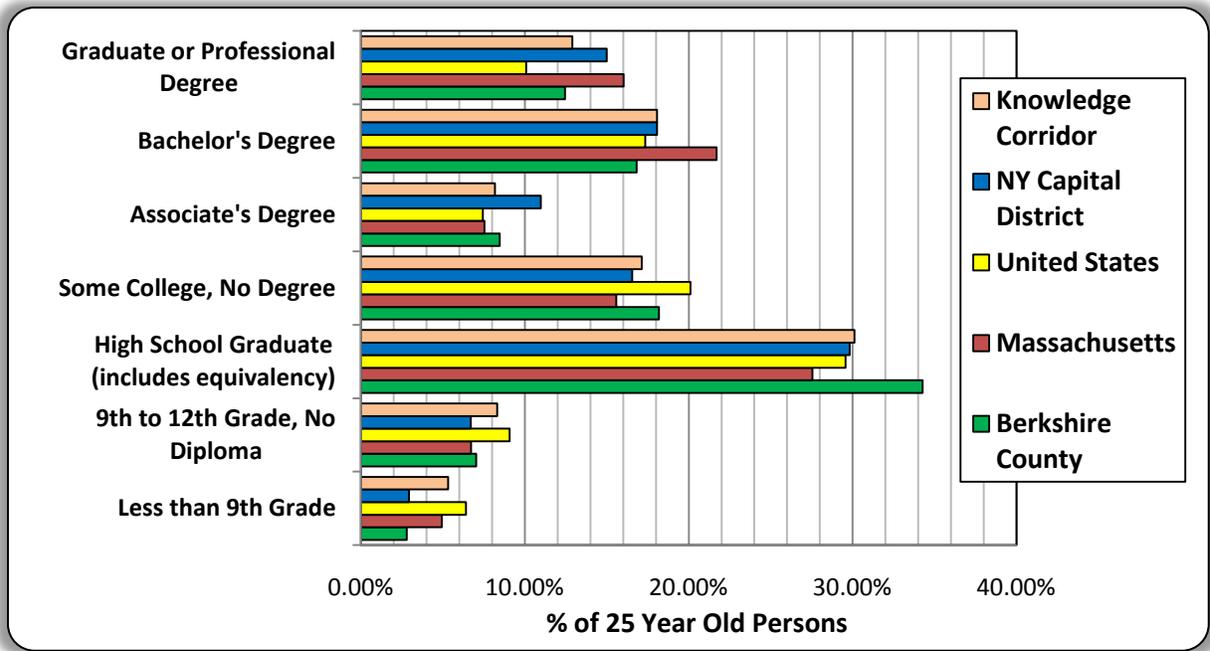
Figure 15: Education Attainment Trend for Berkshire County



The U.S. Census Bureau did not have an "Associate's Degree" category in the 1980 Census.
 Source: US Census American Community Survey 2006-2008

To determine how the citizen of Berkshire County ranked in terms of education attainment, a comparison was done between the adjacent economic regions, the state and nation, as shown on the *Comparison of Educational Attainment* graph (Figure 16). Berkshire County surpassed all compared areas for individuals completing their high school education or equivalency, with 34.27%. Conversely, Berkshire County had a lesser percentage of individuals pursuing and/or completing some level of post-secondary education than other areas. While there are a larger number of individuals in Berkshire County with bachelor or higher degrees than individuals with associate's degrees, which indicates a well-educated population, Berkshire County is not as well educated as other areas.

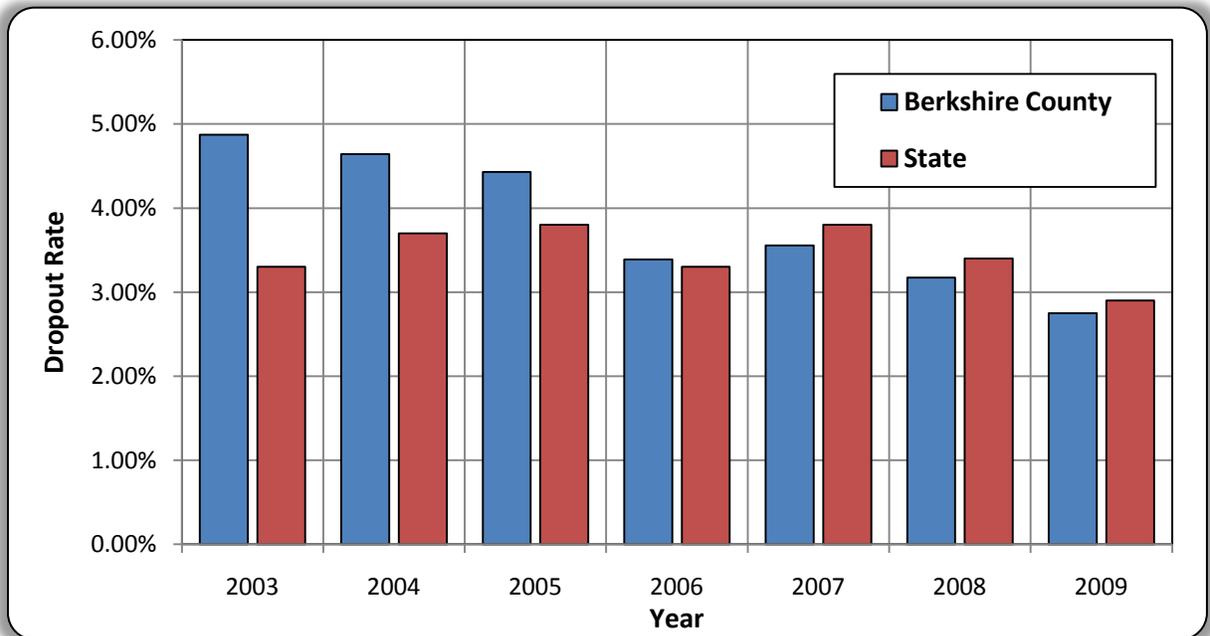
Figure 16: Comparison of Education Attainment



Source: US Census American Community Survey 2006-2008

The dropout rate is another element in education worth examining. This comparison, as shown in *Comparison of the State and Berkshire County's Dropout Rates, 2003-2009* graph (Figure 17), indicates that although Berkshire County had higher dropout rates compared to the state in the earlier part of the 2000's by 2006 the rates had equalized. In 2007 to 2009, the dropout rate for Berkshire County has been below that of the state.

Figure 17: Comparison of State and Berkshire County's Dropout Rates, 2003-2009



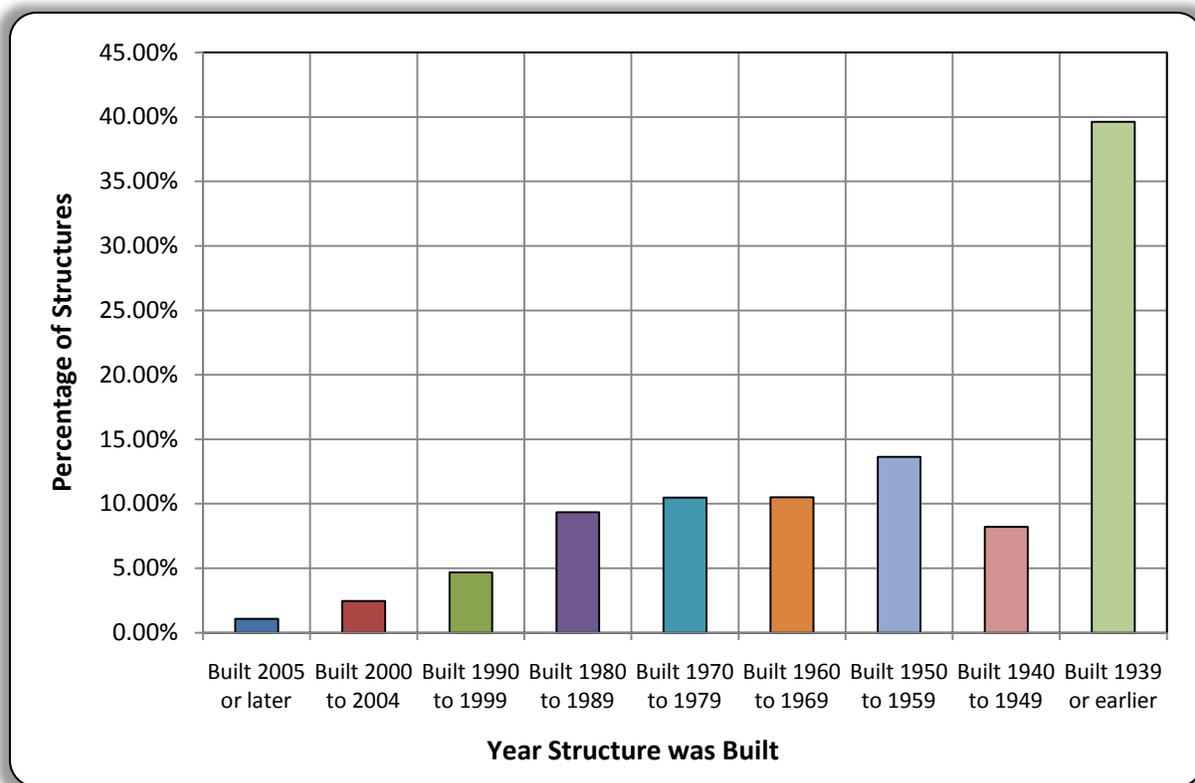
Source: Massachusetts Department of Education, 2003-2009

Housing Component

Another large influencing factor affecting economic development and growth is housing. If a community or region is not able to provide or support the housing demands of a new or expanding business or company then they will most likely look else were. As discussed earlier, Berkshire County has a limited amount of landmass that can be developed. Therefore, the existing housing stock of the county must be examined to determine its ability to support the needs of present and future demands.

As shown in the *Age of Housing Stock in Berkshire County* graph (Figure 18), it indicates that of the 68,107 homes in the county 39.63% of those homes were built in 1939 or earlier. Of the remaining housing stock, more than half is still older than 30-years. Only 1.03% of the county's homes were built in the last 5-years, which may be the result of the recent recession or a saturation of the housing market. The lack of modern housing may be an inhibitor for the attraction of businesses or industries that are looking to secure young professionals. It has been suggested that young professionals are more concerned about quality of life elements (i.e. housing) than older generations.

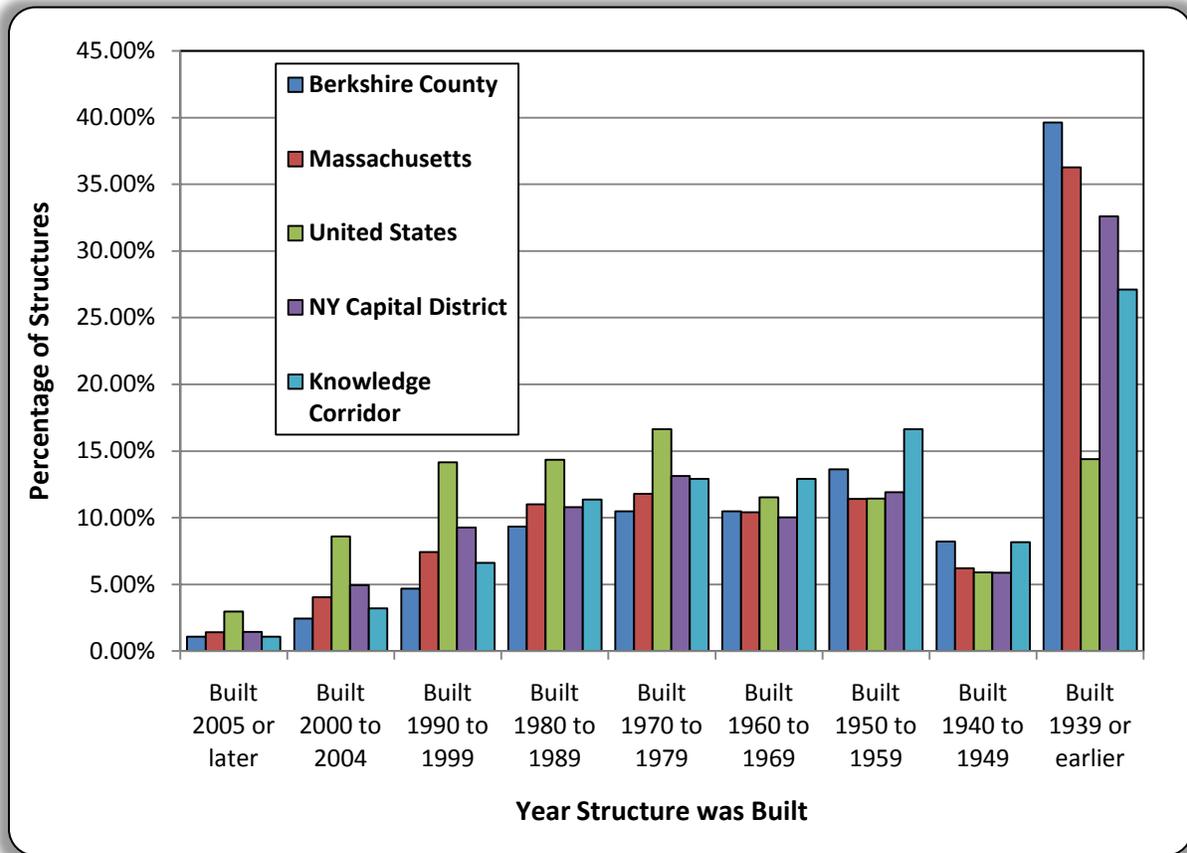
Figure 18: Age of Housing Stock in Berkshire County



Source: US Census American Community Survey 2006-2008

In comparison with other economic regions, the state and national numbers, Berkshire County still has a higher percentage of its housing stock that was built in 1939 or earlier. The trend shown in the *Age of Housing Stock Comparison* graph (Figure 19), indicates that most housing in the county was built in 1939 or earlier.

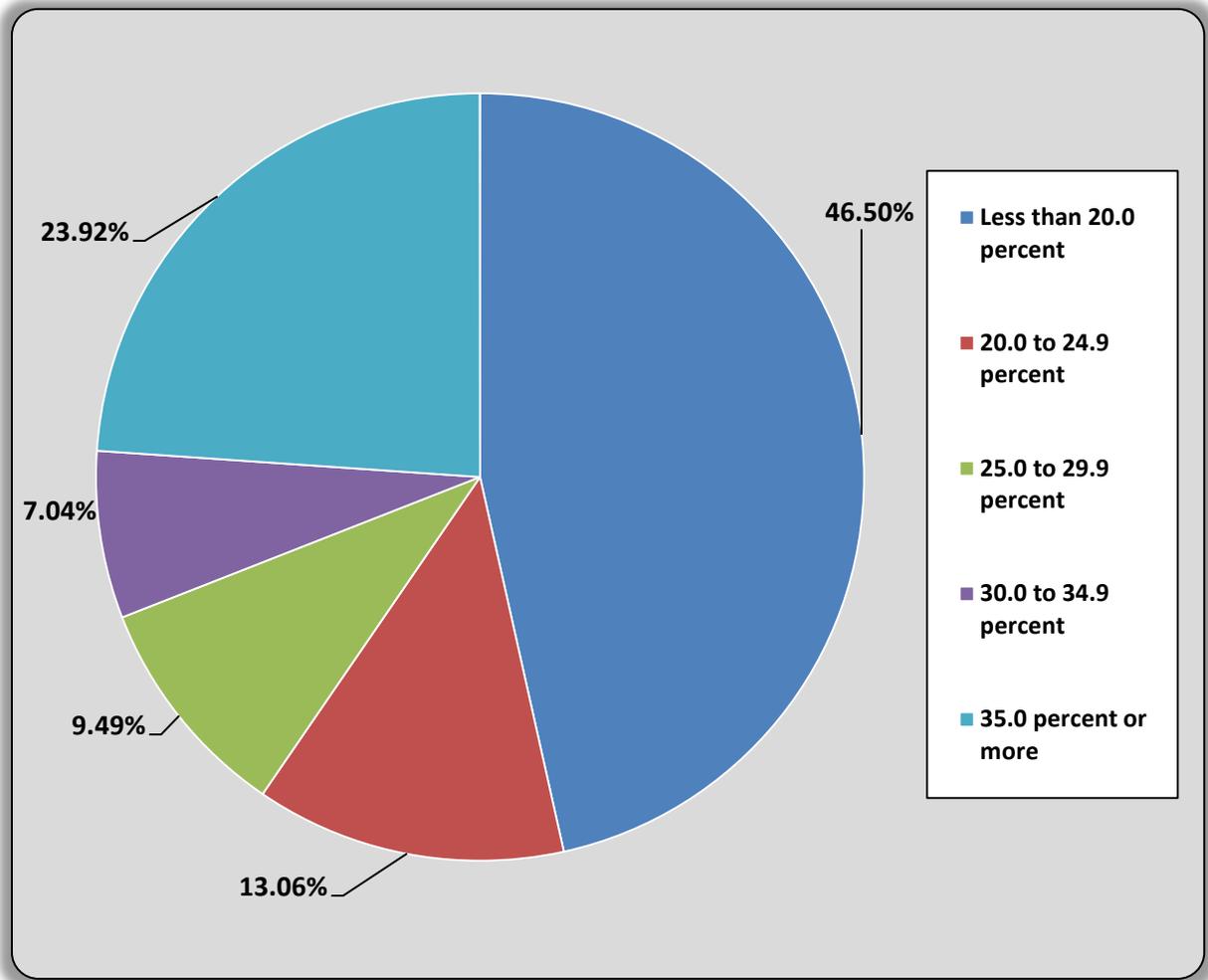
Figure 19: Age of Housing Stock Comparison



Source: US Census American Community Survey 2006-2008

For many individuals and families looking to purchase a home, the age isn't necessarily the largest factor. The initial concerns are what will the home cost and what is its value. In Berkshire County, according to information shown on the *Housing Cost Relative to the Percentage of Household Income for Berkshire County, 2008* graph (Figure 20), 46.50% of Berkshire County's population has a housing cost that is less than 20% of their household income. In contrast, 23.92% of the county's population has a housing cost that is 35% or more of their household income.

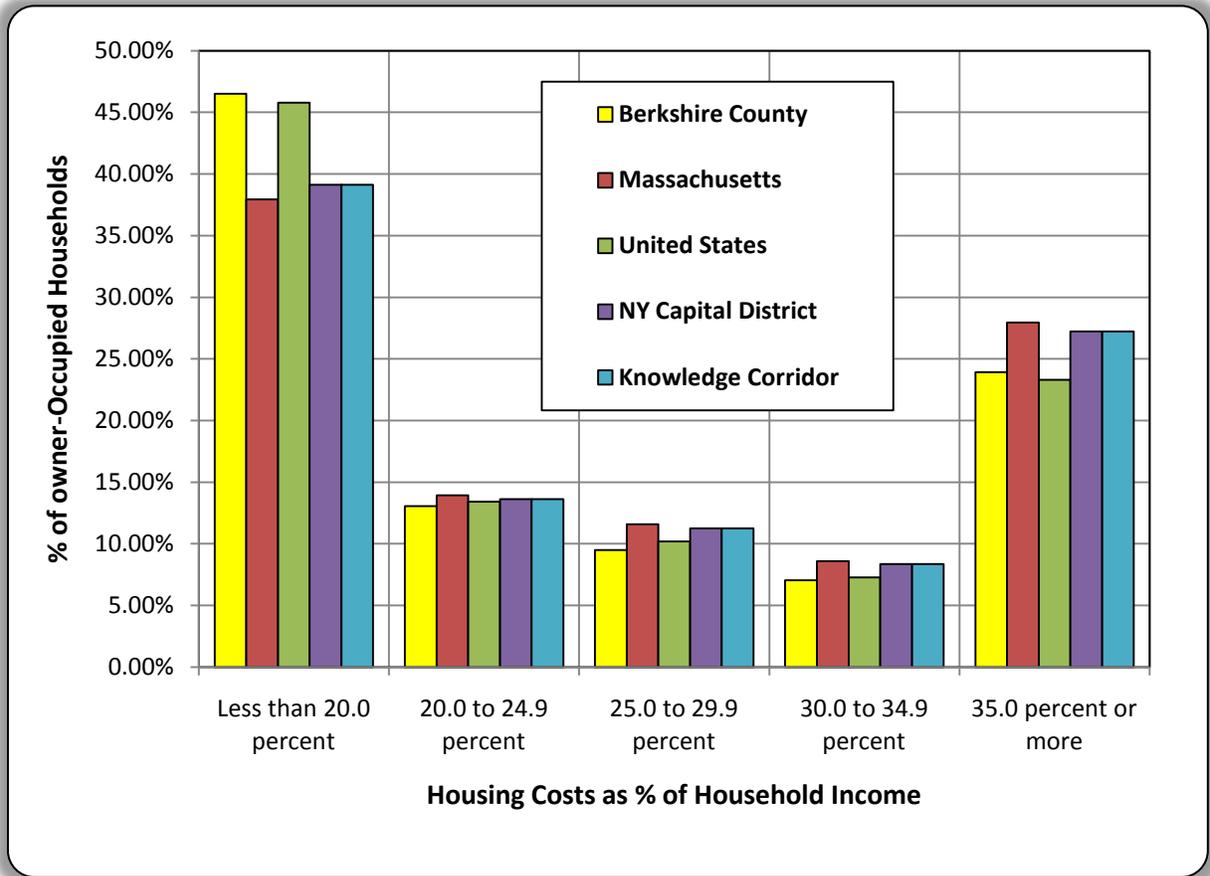
Figure 20: Housing Cost Relative to the Percentage of Household Income for Berkshire County, 2008



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2006-2008

The *Housing Cost Relative to Percentage of Household Income Comparison* graph (Figure 21), illustrates the comparison of housing costs relative to household income with that of adjacent economic regions, the state and the nation. The results of this comparison indicate that Berkshire County is similar to other areas in terms of housing cost relative to percentage of household income. Of households with less than 20% of their income going towards housing costs, Berkshire County has a greater percentage than the state, which indicates a housing stack that is more affordable and some degree of stability.

Figure 21: Housing Cost Relative to Percentage of Household Income Comparison, 2008



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2006-2008

Another means to examine the stability of housing stock is to evaluate the value of homes in a given area. In Berkshire County, as shown on *A Comparison of Home Values* table (Table 15), the median home value is \$196,200 in 2008. The median home value in Berkshire County is consistent with the nation (\$192,400), but is well below that of Massachusetts (\$363,900). Berkshire County is comparable with the NY Capital District (\$188,461) but is somewhat below that of the Knowledge Corridor (\$234,076).

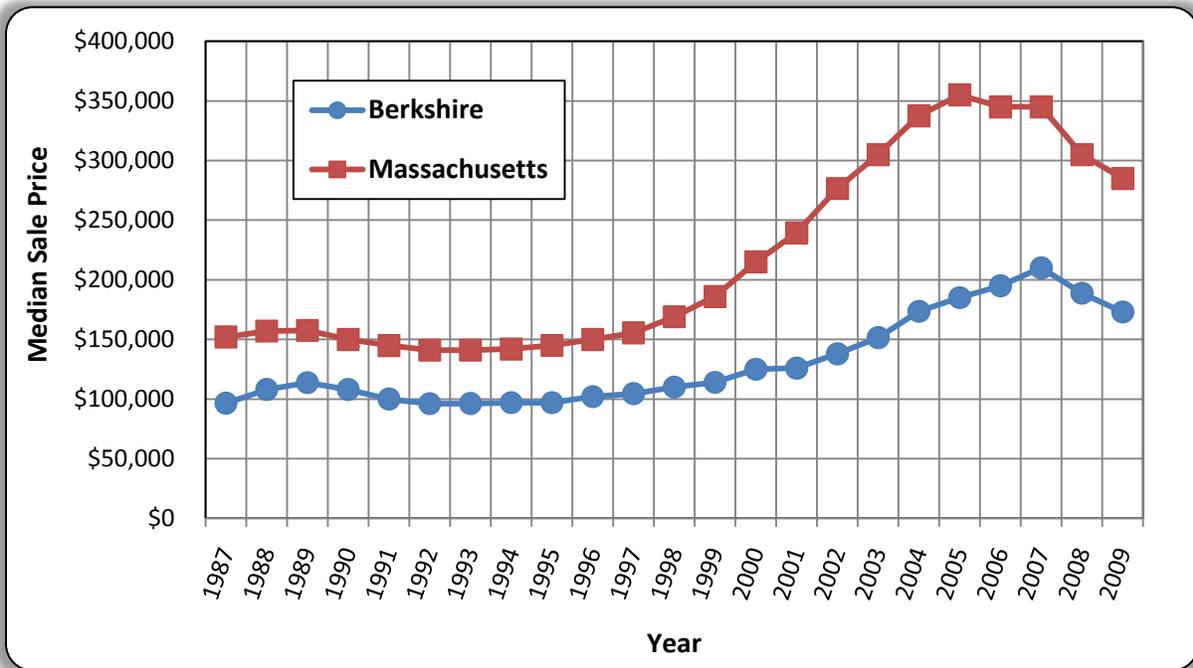
Table 15: A Comparison of Home Values, 2008

Housing Value	Berkshire County	Massachusetts	United States	NY Capital District	Knowledge Corridor
Total Owner-Occupied Units	37,814	1,594,928	75,363,085	215,999	376,516
Less than \$50,000	1,196	17,948	5,956,639	10,943	5,406
\$50,000 to \$99,999	3,074	20,486	11,153,110	22,100	9,623
\$100,000 to \$149,999	6,891	56,606	11,585,357	38,335	39,666
\$150,000 to \$199,999	8,266	109,084	10,355,135	48,537	78,076
\$200,000 to \$299,999	8,197	333,901	12,923,746	56,325	127,300
\$300,000 to \$499,999	6,665	662,386	13,088,397	31,879	91,981
\$500,000 to \$999,999	2,806	333,225	8,358,666	6,645	21,394
\$1,000,000 or more	719	61,292	1,942,035	1,235	3,070
Median (dollars)	\$196,200	\$363,900	\$192,400	\$188,461	\$234,076

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2006-2008

As the *Comparison of State and Berkshire County's Median Single-Family Home Sale Price* graph (Figure 22) shows, the median sales value for single-family homes in the Berkshire County was fairly stable throughout the late 1980's and much of the 1990's. Then during the period between 1997 and 2005 the median sales value began to rise, in both the state and the county. However, during the same period, Berkshire County sales values did not increase as much as the state. The greatest gap occurred in 2005. Closely after its peak, as Figure 22 indicates, the housing values began to decline in the state. The decline of values in Berkshire County was later than that statewide and did not occur until 2007.

Figure 22: Comparison of State and Berkshire County's Median Single-Family Home Sale Price, 1987 to 2009



Source: Banker & Tradesman

Another commonly known element of a region's housing stability is the presence of "2nd" or "Seasonal" homes. The occurrence of this type of housing can have broad ramifications, such as the pricing out local residents, and generally occurs in areas with an emphasis on tourism or seasonal industries. In Berkshire County, according to ACS data, six communities have greater than 50 percent of their housing stocks identified as seasonal homes. A comparison of Berkshire County's seasonal home data to that of adjacent regions, the state and nation, indicates the presence of almost 4 times as many seasonal homes.

The number of new home starts can be an indicator of an area's growth. As partially demonstrated in Figures 19 and 20 and as shown on the *Comparison of Housing Starts, 1990-2009* table (Table 16), new home starts in Berkshire County have decreased by about half since 1990. This decrease is consistent with the state, nation and adjacent regions. Regardless of the decrease, the extremely low number of housing starts is not surprising given that the population of Berkshire County has been steadily falling since the 1970's.

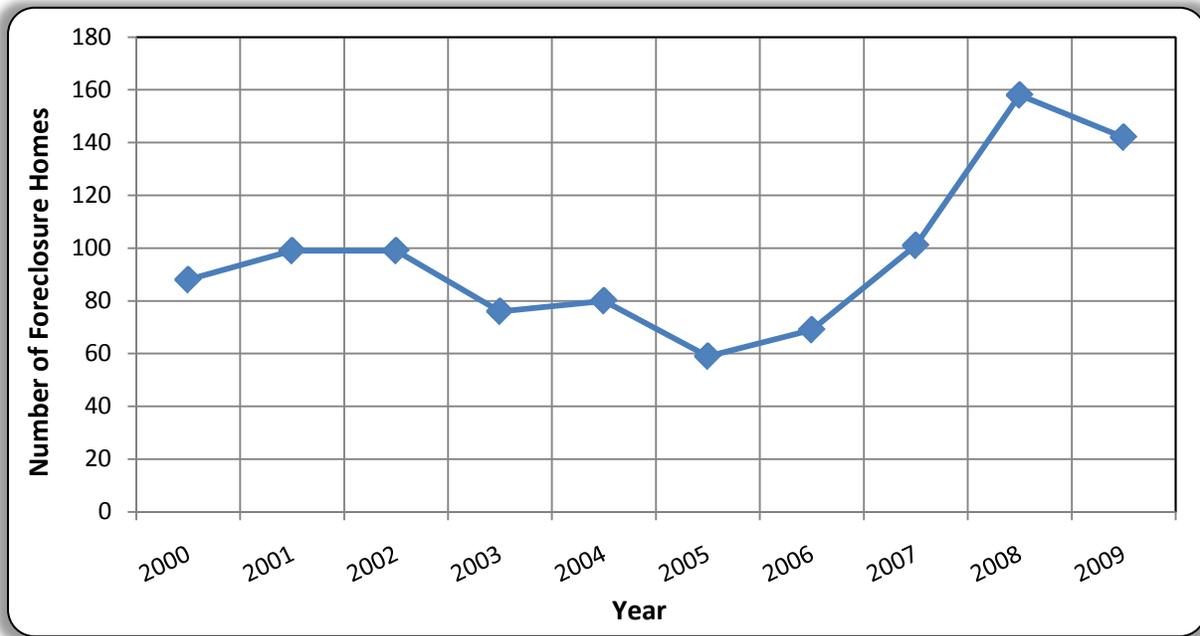
Table 16: Comparison of Housing Starts, 1990-2009

Year	Berkshire County	Massachusetts	United States	NY Capital District	Knowledge Corridor
2009	173	7,941	582,963	1,347	1,376
2000	314	18,000	1,592,267	2,517	2,825
1990	377	14,290	1,110,766	2,755	3,182

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Building Permit Data
Based on number of building permits.

The final indicator of an area’s housing stability is the number of foreclosures. Figure 23 shows the number of foreclosures in Berkshire County from 2000 to 2009. In Berkshire County, over the past ten years, foreclosures have been low. In 2005, the trend of foreclosures gradually began to increase but peaked in 2008 (158 homes foreclosed). Following the 2008 peak, foreclosures have started to drop.

Figure 23: Trend of Foreclosure for Berkshire County, 2000-2009



Source: State of Massachusetts Registry of Deeds

Historic Resources

In Berkshire County, there is a wealth of historic resources. These resources not only provide us with a unique look into the past and information on how the region was settled and developed, but they also contribute to the economy of the region. These resources are important aspects of the cultural economy and add to the economic diversity of the region.

Infrastructure Characteristics

The availability and capacity of an area's infrastructure to accommodate the needs of a community and its potential growth is a determining factor of economic development and growth. Berkshire County, in general, has sufficient sewer and water capacity and infrastructure in place to support economic growth, although there are some communities with identified deficiencies. Regionally, the transportation network is served by multiple modes able to convey goods and persons to, from and throughout the county efficiently. Yet, the regional highway system has long been recognized as deficient and is a key barrier to economic revitalization. For a region its size, Berkshire County is well served by airports and the recent efforts to upgrade the Pittsfield Municipal Airport should aid in the movement of good and persons. Great strides have been made developing and upgrading communication networks regionally; however, there still are great steps needed to ensure Berkshire County's competitiveness in this global economy.

Airports

The Berkshires are approximately within an hour of Albany International Airport and an hour and a half from Bradley International Airport in Hartford. Both airports offer multiple passenger carriers but are not significant hubs for major airlines.

Pittsfield and North Adams have municipally operated general aviation airports with no scheduled passenger service. The Pittsfield Airport is currently undertaking the first phase of a twenty million dollar upgrade to the runways and adjacent areas as well as user amenities. The Walter J. Koladza Airport on Egremont Plain Road (Route 71), in Great Barrington is a privately owned grass airstrip that received marking upgrades through MassDOT in 2010.

Highways

Access to freeways is a significant detraction to economic development for the urbanized areas of the Berkshires. The Massachusetts Turnpike runs east-west across the region, with a full interchange in Lee and a half interchange in West Stockbridge. Other east-west and the north-south routes across the region are winding roads with significant grade changes and flow interruptions. Those other routes also traverse and disrupt many of the town centers and hamlets that exemplify the rural character and desirability of life in the Berkshires. There are occasional three (3) and four (4) lane sections of road on the region's arterials that allow for passing.

The lack of limited access freeways and land use conflicts contribute to congestion. This is a significant transportation limitation to economic development and regional competitiveness. Financial and environmental challenges make proposals such as new bypass roads and interchanges unviable. The 2011 Regional Transportation Plan suggests examining the freight context of each federally funded road project in order to make incremental improvements to the overall flow of people and goods through the Berkshires.

Railroads

CSX's New England Division Main Line traverses the center of the county, running east-west from West Stockbridge, through Pittsfield, to Becket. CSX and MassDOT should complete work by August 15, 2012 to allow for 2nd generation double-stack freight rail from the New York/Massachusetts state line to Westborough. This will provide an uninterrupted double-stack clearance rail corridor from Chicago to Worcester for more competitive rail shipping. AMTRAK uses the CSX corridor for east-west travel, stopping in Pittsfield. Enhanced service between Albany and Boston is desirable, but not imminent.

The Pan Am Southern route runs through Williamstown, North Adams, and Florida. The MassDOT 2011 Rail Plan calls for increasing weight limits across the route but does not indicate timing or funding.

The Housatonic railroad is a Class C railroad running from Northwest Connecticut through Sheffield, Great Barrington, Stockbridge, Lee, Lenox to Pittsfield, where it joins the CSX mainline. Class C rail is eligible for Massachusetts maintenance tax credits in order to improve the condition of the route. MassDOT assists with operating this line as a scenic rail line along the Housatonic and there are current proposals for providing regular north-south passenger service. This would improve the region's access to the greater New York area, increase investment and promote the economy.

Solid Waste Disposal

Solid waste disposal in Berkshire County is handled in two main ways, through municipal transfer stations or curbside pickup (Pittsfield), or private garbage collection companies. There are 29 communities that provide some sort of municipal garbage collection. When citizens chose to use transfer stations, materials are separated into recyclables and waste. Recyclables are typically gathered and brought to the privately operated regional resource recovery facility in Pittsfield. Waste is hauled away to large commercial landfills outside of the county or to regional resource recovery facility in Pittsfield, which also has an incinerator.

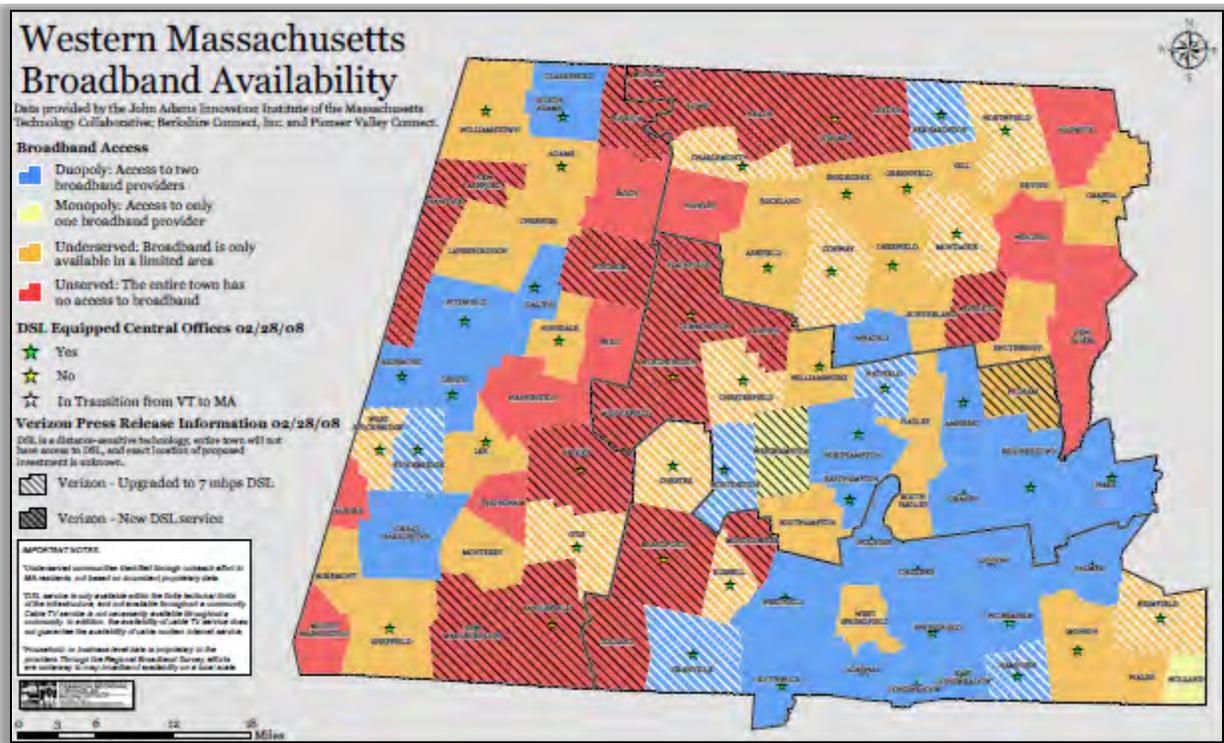
Telecommunication Service

As businesses and industries continue to evolve, the modernization of their equipment to stay competitive is a basic need; just as there is a growing need and demand for improved telecommunication services. The initial steps taken by WesternMA Connect, Inc. (formerly Berkshire Connect and Pioneer Valley Connect) have made great strides towards the development and improved service of telecommunication services to the communities of Berkshire County and the great western Massachusetts area.

In concert with WesternMA Connect, Inc, efforts there is an emerging initiative to develop "Last-Mile" telecommunications infrastructure in western Massachusetts as well. This initiative is a collaborative effort being pursued by WiredWest and approximately 50 communities throughout western Massachusetts. The proposed infrastructure will build upon the proposed equipment being installed under the WesternMA Connect, Inc. initiative.

According to data gathered by WesternMA Connect, Inc., presented in *Western Massachusetts Broadband Availability* map (Map 3), there are a number of communities underserved or not receiving broadband coverage in Berkshire County. Those communities are generally on the peripheral edge of the county and include the communities of Alford, Becket, Florida, Hancock, Monterey, Mount Washington, New Ashford, Peru, New Marlborough, Sandisfield, Savoy, Tyringham, Washington and Windsor. Of the communities that do receive coverage, they are localized to the core of the county's valley communities. As this data presents, there is a continuing need for the development or expansion of telecommunication service county-wide.

Map 3: Western Massachusetts Broadband Availability



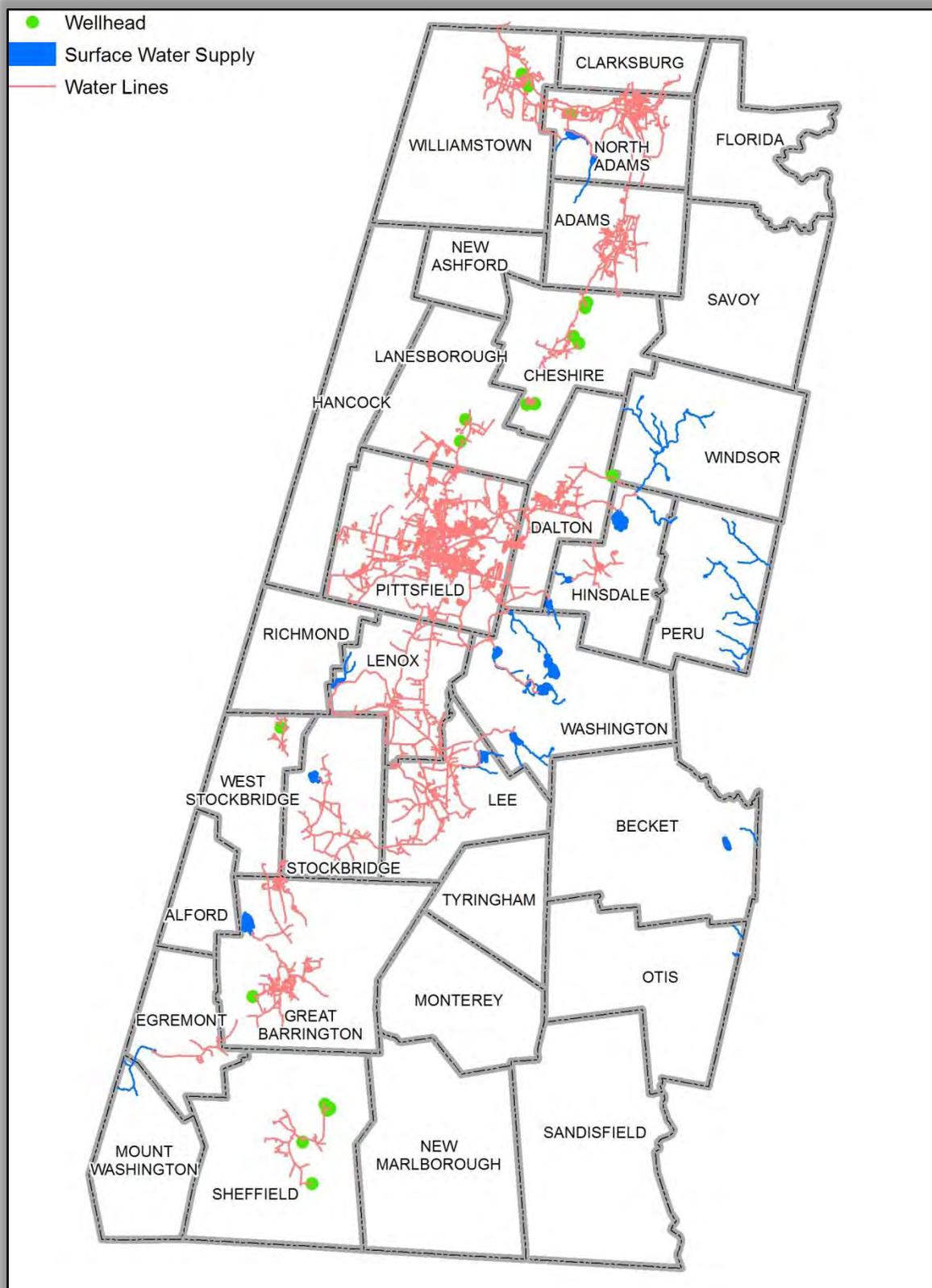
Source: WesternMA Connect, Inc.

Water Supplies

Berkshire County is commonly identified as a water rich region. However, access to potable water varies by community and is provided through sources such as a municipal water system, a private water supplier and/or from individual wells and springs. As is presented in the *Berkshire County Water Systems* map (Map 4), municipal water supplies are predominantly located in more densely settled areas. Of the 17 communities providing water to all or a portion of its residents and businesses, 14 communities provide municipal water. Three private water suppliers in the county provide water in certain neighborhood or portions of the community.

For many economic development opportunities, there is either a new or increased demand for water as a result of the development. Water supply expansion is subject to both local and state (in the instance of developing new well fields) policies that may affect location. Communities with a municipal water service, clear water policies and the capacity to expand their service hold a clear advantage to attract certain development opportunities. Of the municipal water infrastructure in use throughout the County, many segments are being used beyond their expected life. Therefore, it is feasible that much of the region’s municipal water infrastructure will be in need of repair or replacement in the coming years, which may result in impacts and issues for the region’s economy.

Map 4: Berkshire County Water Supply Systems



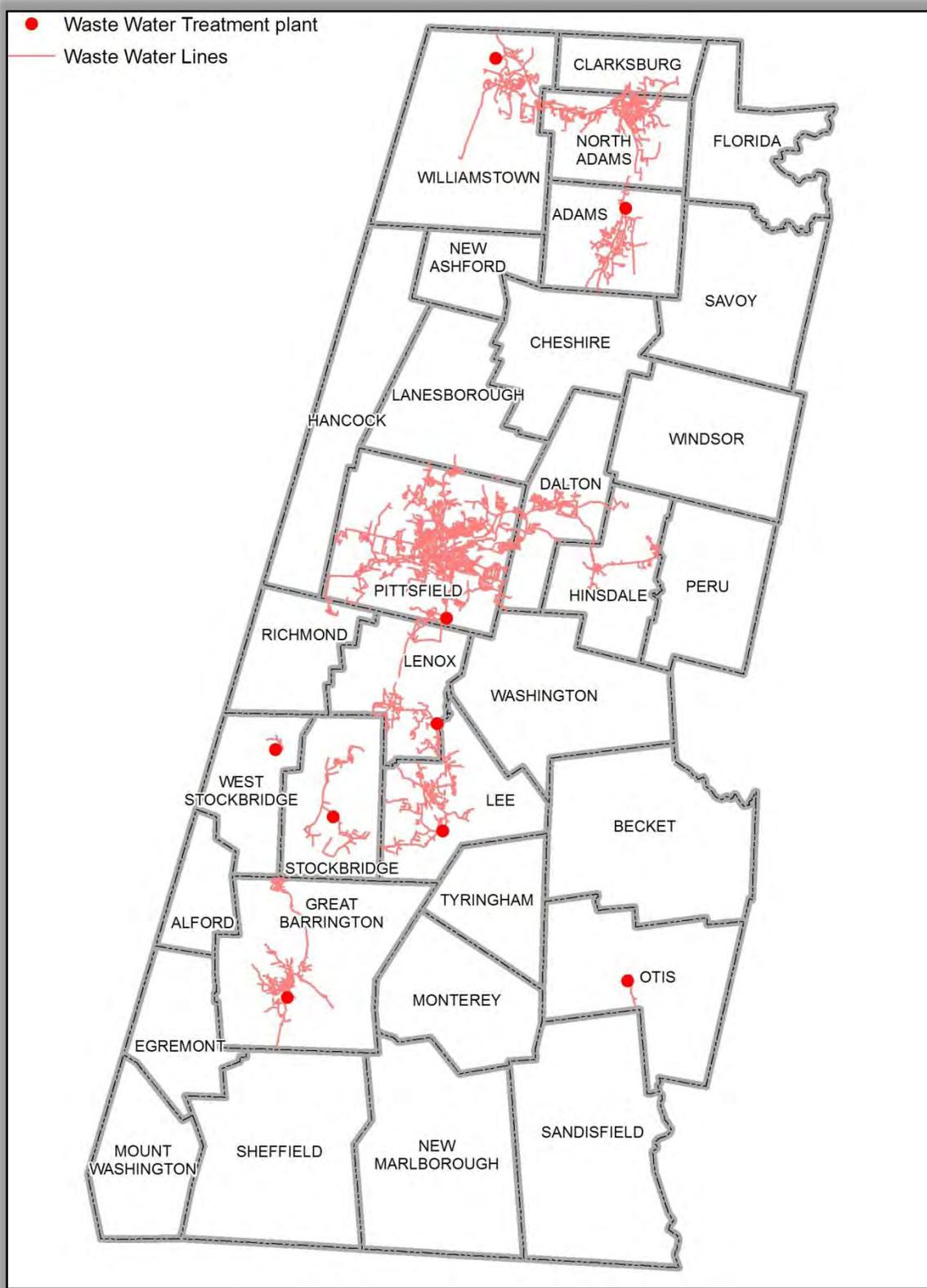
Source: Regional Planning Commission, GIS Data

Wastewater Treatment

Fifteen Berkshire County municipalities provide wastewater treatment to all or a portion of their residents and businesses. To facilitate the municipal wastewater being served, there are 9 publicly owned wastewater treatment plants in Berkshire County. Of those publicly owned wastewater treatment plants, two plants serve multiple communities. The location of the municipal wastewater infrastructure is shown on the *Berkshire County Wastewater Systems* map (Map 5).

As is the case nation-wide, many of the public sewer lines transporting the affluent are aging or exceed their operational expectancy. Due to the high cost of maintaining and upgrading this infrastructure, lines are generally upgraded when larger capital improvement projects are occurring or on an as needed basis, often after a break or leak. Although communities have invested thousands of dollars into public awareness campaigns, there continues to be inflow/infiltration issues that contribute to wastewater treatment plant issues. These wastewater treatment plant issues can lead to reduced capacity, breakdowns and in the extreme instance violation of state and federal laws.

Map 5: Berkshire County Wastewater Systems

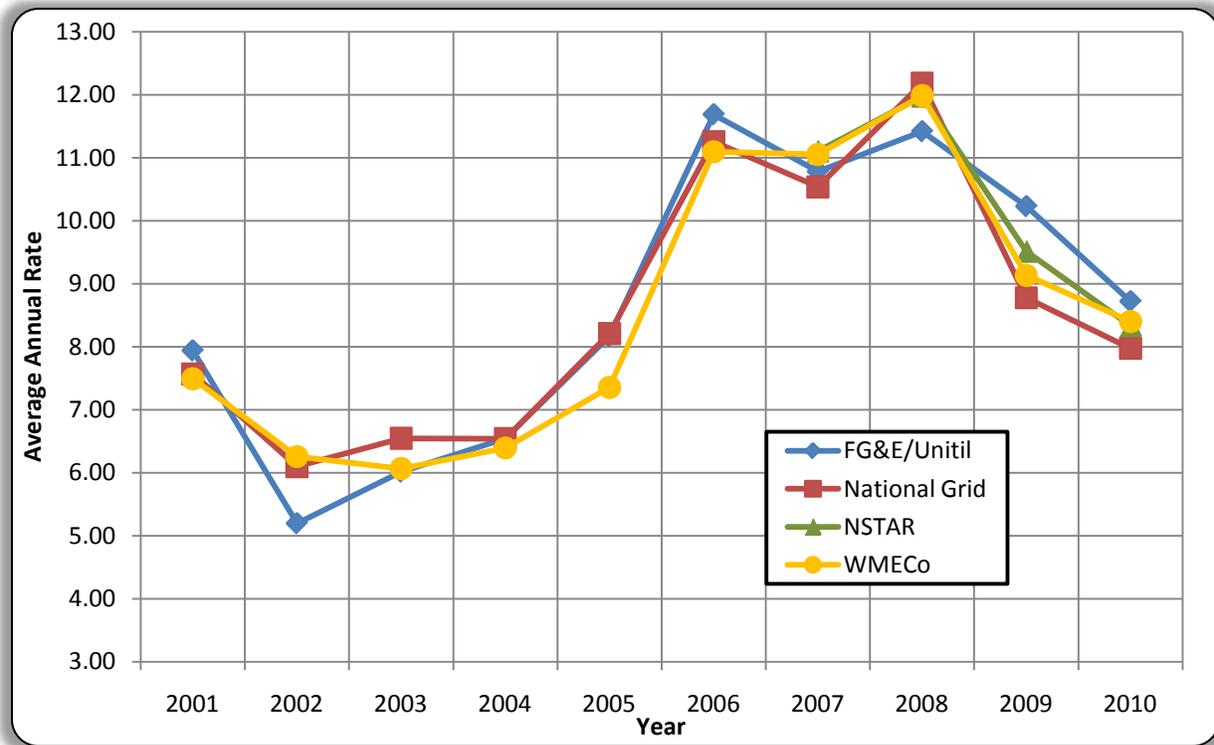


Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, GIS Data

Energy Component

In Berkshire County, electricity is provided by two companies National Grid and Western Massachusetts Electric Company (WMECO). The figure, *A Comparison of Energy Rates by Provider for Massachusetts Distributors* graph (Figure 24) shows that the energy rates charged by different electric companies in Massachusetts are very similar. Not represented within this data are the costs associated with distribution, which is one of the largest cost factors linked to higher energy bills with the region. None of the region's electricity providers were able to supply cost information associated distribution; however, both providers did indicate that the region's electricity infrastructure is aging and in need of updating.

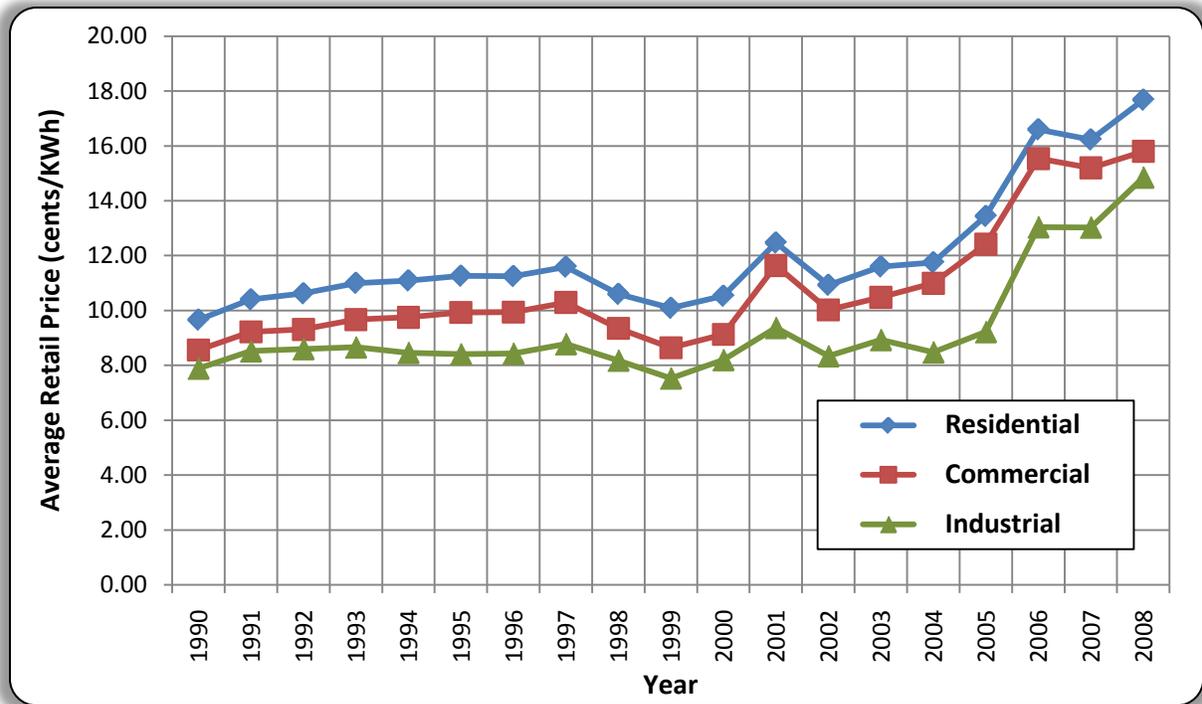
Figure 24: A Comparison of Energy Rates by Provider for Massachusetts Distributors



Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Department of Public Utilities

Energy rate data by provider is only available for the past ten-years. Therefore, to comprehend the long-term costs of electricity overtime, data was obtained from the U.S. Department of Energy. According to information shown on the *Comparison of the Retail Price for Electricity in Massachusetts* graph (Figure 25), the cost of electricity was fairly stable from 1990 to 1997, and then the average retail price of electricity began to fluctuate and rise. In 2002, the average retail price of electricity began a gradual increase to 2008 prices at 17.68 cent/KWh for residential, 15.80 cents/KWh for commercial and 14.85 cents/KWh for industrial. Per the U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has the fourth highest Average Retail Sale price of electricity in the nation.

Figure 25: Comparison of the Retail Price for Electricity in Massachusetts



Source: U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration, Annual Electric Power Industry Report.

In recent years, there have been a number of efforts in Berkshire County and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to identify and develop alternative energy resources. Of those known alternative energy resources studied, Berkshire County has a number of potential energy opportunities including solar, wind and hydro.

Cluster Factors in the Berkshires

Clustering of business or industry types has emerged in the field of economic planning as an approach that promotes economic development and growth. It does so by increasing the ability of these businesses or industries to collaborate, build common suppliers and markets, and create common workforce skills, thereby improving overall competitiveness. In addition, the implementation of this concept regionally presents the potential to disperse the economic generating activities to various communities while still maintaining the proximity of those industries so the diffusion of ideas, concepts and products can still flow freely. Furthermore, employing this concept regionally also minimizes the adverse impacts to one community associated with large-scale developments. The implementation and success of clustering economically intertwined industries strengthens a region, while contributing to a robust state and national economy. In recent years, the EDA has encouraged this type of economic planning.

Regional Clusters

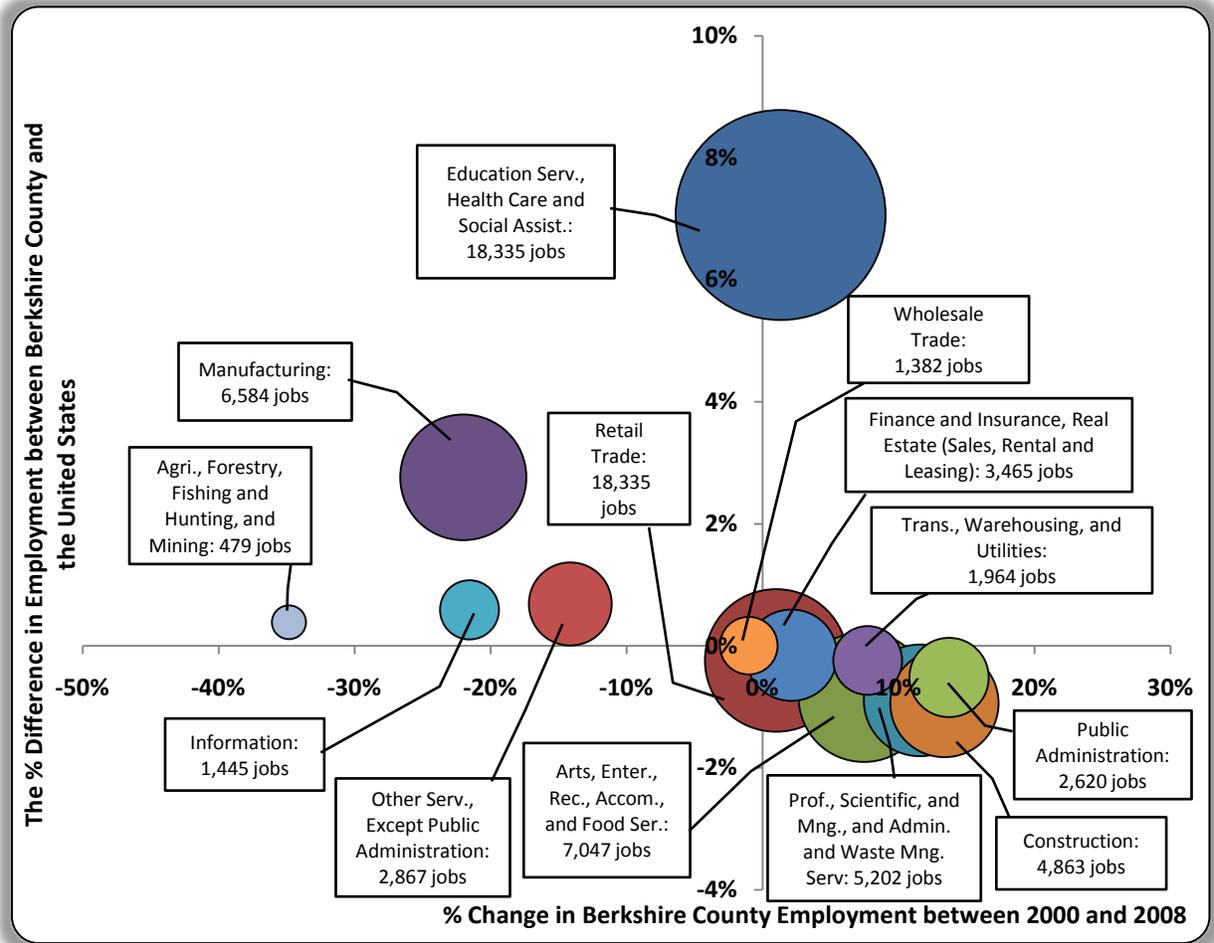
Regional clusters are groups of interconnected companies and associated institutions of a particular field that are geographically located in close proximity. Through their geographic proximity, there is the ability to mutually work beneficially and collaboratively in a number of ways. These include: the dissemination of concepts, ideas and technology; the development of a well skilled labor force with common skill sets; the enhanced economic viability of cluster specific support services; and the collaboration of an interconnected network of research and trade initiatives that could boost the competitive edge of cluster.

In 2006, the *Rural Clusters of Innovation: Berkshire Strategy Project* (or Berkshire Blueprint) report was developed as part of a regional initiative to examine the clustering of industries in Berkshire County. The identified cluster industries from that report are:

- Educational Services, and Health Care and Social Assistance (specifically Elementary/Secondary Schools and Hospitals)
- Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Service (specifically Hospitality & Tourism)
- Manufacturing (specifically Plastics)

To ensure the data and information utilized from the Berkshire Blueprint (clustering industries identified above) still corresponds to the clustering industries present in Berkshire County, the cluster modeling used in the Berkshire Blueprint was replicated in Figure 26. The results of the modeling indicated that the three clustering industries above are still present and the *Retail Trade* sector has emerged as a new clustering industry in the region.

Figure 26: Berkshire County's Industry Share and Employment Share as Compared to National Average



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 and American Community Survey 2006-2008

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Chapter 3: An Evaluation of the Berkshire's Competitive Preparedness

Regional Position

To ensure that Berkshire County is prepared and well situated to move forward into the “New Economy” and to establish goals and objectives for this process, the CEDS Strategy Committee was charged with determining the region’s overall economic competitiveness. In establishing this, the Strategy Committee first assessed the region’s characteristic data and considered comments and concerns received during the public outreach initiative. The Committee then defined the region’s opportunities, strengths, threats and weaknesses and looked at investments made within the region in the past and recent present along with those proposed for the future that would support economic development and growth.

Regional Opportunities and Strengths

At the January 11, 2011 meeting of the Strategy Committee, the Committee identified eight significant areas of opportunity and strength the region could use to leverage and facilitate economy development and growth:

Regional Collaboration

In the Berkshires, there is a strong presence of collaborative networks (WesternMass Connect, 1Berkshires Strategic Alliance, Inc, Berkshire Compact for Education, Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, etc.), made up of communities, individuals, organizations and stakeholders. These networks are striving to improve the quality of life and economy vitality of the region. Partners of the collaborative networks work daily to facilitate growth and prosperity and include local groups like the Pittsfield Economic Development Authority (PEDA), the Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation (PERC), Lee Community Development Corporation (Lee CDC), Berkshire Regional Office of the Massachusetts Small Business Development Center Network (SBDC) and others. Through collaboration, the region has been able to open the door for and leverage investments, including those opportunities offered by the Commonwealth and the Federal government. A region’s people and communities that are able to combine efforts and strategize collectively towards the betterment of an area are more enticing to business. Businesses see an opportunity with partnerships to expand channels of communication, share ideas and technology, and create mechanisms to cultivate research and collaborate on trade initiatives; thus generating a competitive edge.

Culturally and Naturally Rich Environment

The Berkshires have a wealth of cultural (i.e. Jacob’s Pillow, Tanglewood, MASS MoCA, Norman Rockwell Museum, etc.) and natural resources that are assets to all its residents and visitors. These positive features, together with a low cost of living compared to other communities in New England, create a way of life that is unmistakably unique. This way of life has a long history of making the Berkshires a place to “Be,” “Belong” and “Become.” To many industries, people and visitors, the availability of and access to intellectual and entertainment opportunities is a necessity. An area able to provide the amenities and opportunities for leisure, entertainment and relaxation is seen to have greater potential than those without.

Educational Institutions

The region's educational institutions, which encompass K-12 programs, preparatory schools and higher education institutions, are crucial partners in the economic future and wellbeing of the region. They account for a large amount of high paying jobs in the region's workforce. Many of the graduates from the region's educational institutions have become employees of industries within the region and Commonwealth. The Berkshire Compact for Education, a regional initiative, is one mechanism being used to improve access to education, training and lifelong learning opportunities and to ensure the Berkshires are a competitive location for the new technology and knowledge-based economy. The Berkshire Compact for Education has made it possible for the region to proactively address the challenges and needs of the changing economy. Berkshire County must not lose sight of other career paths that are necessary to create and sustain a robust economy, such as vocational training and courses needed to develop skilled workers in the electrical, construction, mechanical and plumbing fields. A region that is well positioned to provide and secure well skilled and highly educated workers is able to compete in the modern economy.

Physical and Technology Infrastructure

Throughout the Berkshires, many communities have a surplus of municipal water and sewer capacity. This surplus is due to the previous development of manufacturing facilities, such as the General Electric facility (City of Pittsfield) and vacant paper mills (region-wide). The Berkshires are a "water-rich" area and have abundant water resources to meet increasing water needs, even in the face of climate change. The abundance of water and presence of utility capacity is an advantage that can be translated into reduced startup costs, such as those that would be incurred for line extension and connection fees, or the availability of capacity to facilitate expansion rather than relocate.

Within the region and nationally there has been a renewed interest in the transportation of goods and people by rail, especially with rising fuel costs. The Berkshires are well-served by existing freight railroads. CSX's main line serving New England goes through Pittsfield and PanAm/Norfolk Southern's main New England line goes through North Adams. The Housatonic Railroad, a Class C carrier, provides freight service northward from Connecticut to Pittsfield.

With certain upgrades to existing rail networks, the Berkshires have the potential to have a high level of passenger rail service to New York City and Boston. For communities and the region, the development of a passenger or expanded freight rail network could increase modes of transportation; thus improving access to the area. With increased access, there is the potential for greater economic investment. There are limitations and development factors that must be considered as well, especially when considering high speed rail. To many people and business, the opportunity to move and travel by different means better positions the region strategically in the competitive market of commerce.

Through the work of Western Mass Connect and the Massachusetts Broadband Institute, fiber-based high speed internet access will be available by 2013 to every municipality in the Berkshires. The lack of high speed internet service has been an impediment to economic development across western Massachusetts for well over a decade; the Massachusetts 123 initiative is providing a long-term solution which positions the region well for a number of decades.

Innovation

The region's industries are made up of entrepreneurs, small businesses, sole proprietors as well as national and international companies. Whether it's the long time manufacturing of paper and plastics or the emerging creative and cultural ventures, the Berkshires have a long history of innovators. Some examples of businesses that reflect this innovative spirit include Nuclea Biotechnologies Inc. (Pittsfield),

The Chamberlain Group (Great Barrington) and RTR Technologies (Stockbridge). These businesses don't typically represent a large employment base; yet they represent a large potential for investment. A region with an established structure that caters to and facilitates innovation, especially in the new technology and knowledge-based economies, is more able to marketing to new industries.

Agriculture Production

Historically, the Berkshires have had a long history of agricultural self-reliance. Today, there is strong interest in renewing this heritage by cultivation the thousands of acres of open, arable land. Locally grown food is already a strong attraction for local restaurants and agri-tourism. Areas with strong agricultural production enhance the potential to develop and expand ancillary business, such as community kitchens, value-added products and slaughter facilities. Moreover, by growing and producing a larger proportion of agricultural products consumed in the Berkshires, the cost to consumers is reduced because the transportation costs of locally grown food products are diminished.

Manufacturing Facilities

In the last decade, the region's large number of mill closures has created several unique adaptive reuse opportunities. The prospect of renovating existing structures can result in a number of benefits, such as a shortened development window, elimination of blighted or underutilized space, creation of revenue and tax generating property (once operational) and the creation of jobs or housing. In many cases, the costs and issues associated with creating viable redevelopment space from abandoned mill buildings and sites can be particularly challenging. Communities in the Berkshires strongly support redevelopment/reuse projects involving these mills and they are already well-served by existing utilities so development timetables can be shortened and costs for infrastructure upgrades are minimized.

Redevelopment of Built-Environment

In past decades, there have been efforts to identify and address the region's previously developed sites and structures that are known to be contaminated. Historically, these efforts were championed by private property owners and businesses. However, with the establishment of the Berkshire Brownfields Program, the effort has taken a more regional focus and path. The Berkshire Brownfields Committee is made up of a dedicated group of communities, individuals and organizations that see the importance of a Berkshires unspoiled and free of polluted areas. Several sites that have made progress towards addressing their contamination issues include:

- *The former Sprague Electric Complex, now MASS MoCA, in the City of North Adams;*
- *The former General Electric manufacturing facility, 52-acres are now the Williams Stanley Business Park, in the City of Pittsfield; and*
- *The former New England Log Home site, in Great Barrington.*

When corrective measures are taken to identify and deal with known contaminated sites communities and the region are able to move beyond presumed stigmas. The elimination of assumed affects and impacts can reduce industry hesitation. This can lead to renewed economic interest and investment in a region.

Regional Threats and Weaknesses

At the January 11, 2011 meeting of the Strategy Committee, the Committee identified nine significant areas that threaten and/or weaken the region's economic preparedness, quality of life and welfare which, must be addressed and resolved:

Population Decline and Uneven Stratification of Age Cohorts

The region has experienced, since the 1970's, an aging (Figures 5 and 5 Chapter 2) and steadily declining (Figure 1, Chapter 2) population. The aging and decline of the region's population has and continues to create economic ramifications that strain industries and communities alike. Industries face the increasing prospect that well trained and highly skilled employees will retire. The availability of skilled workers, especially those that are well educated and trained, to replace those positions is of concern. In the instance of Berkshire County, there has not been a documented growth of the region's population since 1970; thus, the prospect of finding equally skilled or trained workers, hopefully from the region's available workforce is diminished. Communities also see the increased possibility of individuals needing and using health and social service programs. A region's youth and young adult age group represent an important component of a region's economy. They hold a large share of consumer spending and are a huge source of temporary part-time and full-time employees. A prolonged population decline or age cohort imbalance has the potential to translate into disinvestment by businesses and companies within and interested in the region.

Industry Transition

There is an ongoing shift occurring in the region's economy. Jobs in the manufacturing industry are being replaced by positions in healthcare and education; arts and entertainment; professional service; insurance and real estate; accommodations, food service and retail industries (Figure 8, Chapter 2). In most instances, the modernization and growth of a region's industries is seen as being good. When, however, those industries that are growing provide lower paying jobs, employ fewer people and are growing at a slower rate than employment losses, there can be troubling consequences. Those consequences can result in: a higher unemployment rate, increased demand for health and social service programs, a higher percentage of individual income going for housing (under 30% is typically seen as good), the loss of capital infusion into the local economy through declines in purchases, increases in property taxes and in extreme instances, population decline.

Wage Shift and Median Family Household Income Drop

The region's transition of industry sectors is closely related to the wage shift from higher paying jobs to lower paying jobs (Table 8, Chapter 2) and also relates to the recent drop in median household income (Figure 11, Chapter 2). The affect of these two issues can lead to critical issues for individuals and business alike. Individuals and families with these reduced incomes will then have less buying power. For an industry this translates into shrinking revenue; thus slowing the region's economy. A prolonged consequence of a slowed regional economy could lead to the elimination of jobs, reduced research and development and industry closures.

Education Attainment Gap

The region's inability to attract and retain individuals with higher educational and training achievement, as well as to ensure they receive the right mix of skills to meet the diverse needs of the region's economy, is a great impediment to the region's economic expansion and long term vitality. While there are educational institutions that teach vocational courses, there is a need for additional trade or vocational courses in the commonly considered core fields of electricians, plumbers, mechanics, etc. The supply of skilled workers, especially those with high levels of education or technical training is essential to a regional economy and more so to compete in the new economy. As the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the United States make advancements in the field of "Bio-Technology," emphasis should be given to developing education courses to meet the growth of this industry. When a region is unable to provide a steady supply of highly skilled laborers to meet the needs of the industries, businesses considering expansions or development prospects, as well as individuals seeking employment, are more likely to pursue opportunities elsewhere.

Housing

In the region, there are two housing related concerns affecting economic stability: affordability and age of the housing stock. When a region is unable to provide adequate housing for its residents and workforce, the results can negatively impact the economic investment potential of the region. One of the many factors industries consider when looking to expand or relocate within a region is housing. When an individual is unable to procure housing they are more likely to seek employment elsewhere or reside in an adjacent community. This can reduce regionally generated revenues and in the instance of commuters unnecessarily burden the region's infrastructure (i.e. roads).

Built-Environment Constraints

Throughout the region, as a result of previous development activities, there exist sites and structures that are labeled contaminated, per the Environmental Protection Agency, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and other agencies, which pose an impediment to economic development and in general create a negative stigma for development in the Berkshires.

When an industry sees uncertainty in a region, due to past or present contamination issues, the potential for investment in new or expanded facilities is greatly reduced. Industries become hesitant to invest in regions that could hurt their corporate image or employees. This hesitancy is the result of an assumed impact; most industries will choose to an alternate site or area that does not carry this stigma. In the long term, this can lead to reduced economic investment and disinvestment in a region.

Environmental Development Constraints

The physical features in the region's natural environment, some of which include wetlands and steep slopes, affect how and where development can take place. In the Berkshires, these hindrances correlate to the limited availability of large developable tracts of land. When a region or community is restricted by its natural surroundings the implications to development include the availability of suitable development sites, the increased price for suitable lands, the increased cost of designing and constructing a development and more restrictive governing requirements. To current or future businesses examining the possibility of expanding or relocating to an area, these constraints can make or break a development prospect.

Local Government Budget Constraints

Much like most of the nation, the region and its communities are feeling the strain of reduced funding from state and federal programs and the slow and less diversified growth of property taxes. When funding shortfalls occur, the greatest impacts are typically felt by individuals and communities. In Massachusetts, the property tax issue is further aggravated by Proposition 2½ which limits property tax increases by Massachusetts municipalities. For industries, considering the possibility of expanding or developing new facilities in a specific location, the prospect of paying elevated development fees, service fees, and property taxes, are all hindrances to economic growth.

Physical and Technology Infrastructure

Due to its natural features and the dispersal of population, the region has limited transportation and telecommunication capacities and networks. While the transportation and telecommunication networks address different needs for a business, specifically they impact a business's access to markets and the cost of doing business. In the business world, if an industry isn't able to access markets, transport and receive goods or connect with its clients (via internet), then the chances for success are greatly reduced.

The lack of a limited access highway from the Mass Pike (I-90) at least to the Pittsfield/central Berkshire area has long been identified as an impediment to economic development in the region, particularly affecting the region's competitiveness for manufacturing and distribution, despite the presence of rail transportation. Without significant improvements in the region's highway access, the full potential of projects involving development of new specialty manufacturing jobs in the region cannot be realized.

Weak access to freeways is a significant detraction to economic development for the urbanized areas of Berkshire County. The lack of a limited access highway creates congestion, negatively impacts redevelopment efforts in Pittsfield and major town centers and is a significant transportation limitation to the region's economic competitiveness.

While significant improvements in the region's telecommunications backbone network are moving into final design, permitting and construction phases as discussed above, the "last-mile" networks will need significant investment in order to continue to provide a high level of telecommunications and broadband service. Various technologies (wireless and fiber) are being considered but due to low population densities and a lack of continued investment adequate to modernize the system by the existing telephone company, providing true broadband level service throughout the region remains a significant challenge which will probably require public investment.

The generation and transmission costs of energy has received a large amount attention in the region because the Berkshires experience some of the highest electricity costs in New England. This is in spite of alternative energy resources (primarily solar and wind facilities) having been developed in small pockets throughout the region in recent years. High electricity costs are typically the result of various factor including high energy generation and transmission costs, users operating inefficient equipment and the local distribution costs. These costs translate into reduced profits for businesses and transferred costs to customers; therefore, hinder economic growth and sustainability.

The presence of adequate infrastructure (roads and telecommunications networks) and low cost energy are fundamental to a vibrant and growing economy.

Regional Investment Efforts

In Berkshire County, economic investments made by federal, state and local governments and private stakeholders have facilitated and supported economic development throughout the region. To many, economic investments are only seen as taking the form of capital infusion or tax breaks. There are, however, other means of investment that are being made everyday into the regional and national economies. These contributions represent assistance programs, planning initiatives, small business loans and streamlined permitting processes to name a few. Even though these investments typically have designated periods of performance or only allow certain actions to take place, each has a lasting impact on the region's overall economy and its competitive edge. Without the contributions and backing of agencies, companies, investment groups, organizations and individuals the economic wellbeing of the region would be worse off.

To simplify the representation of investments that have been made in the past, present and future throughout Berkshire County, those investment efforts have been classified into four categories: 1) Education and Workforce Development; 2) Physical and Technology Infrastructure, including telecommunication and transportation infrastructure; 3) Physical Development; and 4) Programs and Initiatives. This list of investments is not a comprehensive listing of all public and private contributions that have or are being made within Berkshire County only a sample of some of the most exemplary

examples. Investments are being made in the region every day. What is important to note is how each investment has helped to strategically shape and prepare the region for the new economy.

Education and Workforce Development

Education Institutions

The educational institutions throughout the region are key components of the region's economic success and stability. They play a vital role in strategically situating the future workforce and current employees of the region to be well positioned for challenges and innovation in the changing economy. A partnership has been created between the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA), the Berkshire Community College (BCC) and other regional educators and stakeholders to advance the region's education system and to address education attainment and workforce training issues. Through this collaborative initiative, the Berkshire Compact for Education was developed. The Compact has helped to focus regional efforts and initiatives towards the resolution of those obstacles, as well as the expansion of programs that teach courses in up and coming technologies and fields. In October, 2010, MCLA with the support of Governor Deval Patrick and others solidified funding for the \$54.5 million Center for Science and Innovation project at MCLA. The Center will serve as a central location for all of MCLA's science and related programs promoting research-intensive science learning and hands-on discovery. This Center represents an investment in public higher education in Berkshire County. Strategically, the Center will help to establish the region and ensure that Massachusetts remains a leader in scientific innovation and research.

Workforce Training

The Berkshire County Regional Employment Board (BCREB) is the region's leading organization facilitating the development and implementation of workforce assistance, development and training programs. Through these programs, the BCREB works to develop a highly educated and well-trained labor pool that meets the current and future workforce demands of the region's industries. The BCREB also strives to align and strengthen the relationship between industry employers and the region's public schools and post secondary institutions through mentoring and internship opportunities. During the past decade, the BCREB has secured capital investment in the region amounting to \$39 million in workforce resources and another \$9 million in direct company training. A recent result of these investments is the creation of an entry-level training program for those interested in a career pathway into the sustainable energy sector, specifically photovoltaics.

Physical and Technology Infrastructure

Telecommunications

For more than a decade, there has been an initiative within Berkshire County and greater western Massachusetts to advance telecommunications services. WesternMA Connect, Inc (formerly Berkshire Connect, Inc and Pioneer Valley Connect) joined with the John Adams Innovation Institute, in 2005, to explore regional solutions to inadequacies and inefficiencies facing the region. This effort laid the foundation for the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI), which was officially established when Governor Deval Patrick signed the Broadband Act into law in August 2008. The Broadband Act made available \$40 million of state bond funds, which has spurred investment at many levels. The State is presently actively working to resolve the "Middle-Mile" issue, where as local efforts have been focused on the "Last-Mile" issue. The State's efforts led to a successful application for \$45.4 million in Federal Economic Stimulus funds which, coupled with \$26.2 million in State bond funds, will allow the build-out of a middle-mile fiber optic broadband network reaching community anchor institutions in every unserved municipality in the County. The result of any investment in the broadband telecommunications

network will facilitate economic development efforts and a better quality of life. A remaining key challenge is to provide broadband to the “last-mile” – serving individual businesses and homes throughout the region. The MBI is hoping to attract a variety of private providers who may utilize a variety of technologies, including DSL, Cable TV, fixed Wireless or fiber to serve the last-mile customers. One key locally based initiative which has the support of 47 un- or under-served towns throughout the four western Massachusetts counties is WiredWest which intends to establish a regional publically-owned and operated telecommunications cooperative providing fiber optic connectivity to un-served last mile customers.

Roads

As previously discussed, the region’s road network has been one of the largest inhibitors to economic growth and prosperity. Over the past decade, several significant projects have been identified which, if implemented, will make some improvements in this situation. These include widening East Street in Pittsfield to four lanes, significant circulation improvements around the Berkshire Medical Center and moving forward with a focused study on improving traffic flow through Lee or considering a new interchange with the MassPike (I-90) in the vicinity of the Lee/Stockbridge town line, connecting with Route. 7 to the north. Current highway funding is not capable of keeping up with maintenance/reconstruction of the existing roadway system and with the exception of very small scale spot improvements to intersections, there are inadequate funding resources to implement many larger scale projects. One notable exception is the improvements to Rte. 7/20 (South Street) in southern Pittsfield which will improve traffic conditions and reduce delay along this critical arterial highway. This project is expected to go to bid and be under construction in 2012. The region was able to access over \$30 million in federal economic stimulus funding in 2009-2010 to rehabilitate a number of arterial roadways which improved travel conditions and reduced the long backlog of routine rehabilitation/reconstruction projects needed in the region.

Physical Development

Colonial Theatre

In 1997, with renewed community support, then State Senator Andrea F. Nuciforo, Jr. of Pittsfield facilitated the \$2.5 million Massachusetts Convention Center Bond Bill to aid in the restoration of The Colonial Theatre. Through continued support from Senator Nuciforo, other local and national representatives and the City of Pittsfield, the support of numerous private individuals and businesses was leveraged. Leading the effort was The Colonial Theatre Association (CTA), a 501(c)(3) charged with fundraising and managing the theatre restoration, the building and theatrical operations. Community based organizations, such as the Friends of The Colonial Theatre Restoration Inc. helped rebuild the audience base and community support for the theater. In 2001, the building was purchased from the Miller Family by the CTA and restoration began while fundraising continued. After a twenty-two month rehabilitation and reconstruction process, the Colonial reopened in August of 2006.

In recent years, the Colonial has emerged as an economic asset and driver for the City of Pittsfield and the region. Through its current operations, the Colonial provides an enhanced learning experience for the region’s school children, has served hundreds of thousands of visitors, generated millions annually in community economic impact and has fulfilled or surpassed the expectations most people in the Berkshires. The restoration of the Colonial Theatre generated hundreds of construction jobs, raised over \$21 million in public and private funds, and has become a regional gem.

Berkshire Museum

Over the past decade, the Berkshire Museum has undergone an extensive renovation of its facility in Pittsfield, MA. This transformation was partially funded through grants from MassDevelopment and a capital campaign, entitled “A Wider Window.” This multi-phased, multi-year effort has included, but is not limited, to the installation and upgrading of such facility components as the copper roof, the new 3,000-square foot Feigenbaum Hall of Innovation, the restoration of the fireplace and Stirling Calder fountain in the art deco Crane Room, a new visitor center and improved circulation throughout the historic building. With the completion of this reinvestment, the Berkshire Museum is once again an economic focal point.

MASS MoCA

In 1986, following the closing of the Electric Sprague Company, the business and political leaders of the City of North Adams began seeking ways to creatively re-use the vast Sprague complex. During the same time, Thomas Krens, director of the Williams College Museum of Arts, was looking for space to exhibit large works of art. Through the next decade, a movement of broad community and state support began to develop the framework for what is now known as the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA). The development of the MASS MoCA project was funded through public and private monies in excess of \$68.4 million. On May 30, 1999, the 13-acre MASS MoCA campus of renovated 19th-century factory buildings was opened.

In recent years, MASS MoCA receives approximately 120,000 visitors annually, ranking it among the most visited institutions in the United States dedicated to new art. At the MASS MoCA complex, 80 major new works of art and more than 50 performances have been shown. To offset operating costs and stimulate job growth in the region, MASS MoCA provides lease space for a wide range of exciting business, including restaurants, publishing companies, law firms, photography studios and computer-generated special effects. Through a collaborative network of regional partners from across the county, MASS MoCA has worked to strengthen regional tourism, improve infrastructure for small business development and attract and retain residents.

Programs and Initiatives

Creative Economy

The mission of the Berkshire Creative Economy Council (Berkshire Creative) is to stimulate and support job growth and economic opportunity in Berkshire County by sparking innovative collaborations between artists, designers, cultural institutions and businesses. Berkshire Creative serves the community of Berkshire-based individuals and businesses, ranging from museums, historic homes, performing arts centers and theater companies to designers, architects, artists and manufacturers who each contribute to the distinctly creative and innovative nature of the region.

Berkshire Creative was established in the fall of 2007 to implement the recommendations outlined in the *Berkshire Creative Economy Report* published in March 2007 and funded by the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative for \$150,000. It was at this critical juncture that Berkshire Creative was provided with a Massachusetts Cultural Council \$100,000 Adams matching grant. The Adams grant provided the fiscal support and leverage necessary for Berkshire Creative to make its pivotal transition from a steering committee of invested community members to an organization with a highly committed board and a staff of one.

In the three years since, Berkshire Creative has made great strides to highlight and facilitate the growth of the creative economy in Berkshire County. In 2010, Berkshire Creative launched the Creative Challenge

initiative. Through this initiative, Berkshire Creative has partnered with a local business to define the nature, format and criteria of their Creative Challenge. This Challenge can result in the development of new product line, the re-visioning of existing products, the generation of new ideas and concepts for existing production methods and more. Berkshire Creative is also host to a number of other programs and initiatives that assist artists make connection with industry producers and investors regionally and nationally.

Collaboration

Throughout Berkshire County, there has been a well-established network of communities, individuals, organizations and stakeholders focusing on the wellbeing of the region's economy. With each economic challenge or threat that has tested the region, this network of dedicated individuals has strived to overcome the region's economic woes. Most recently, this group facilitated and guided the development of such economic planning documents as the 2006 *Rural Clusters of Innovation: Berkshires Strategy Project* (Berkshire Blueprint) and the 2007 *Berkshire Creative Economy Report*. Within this network, there has been a regional shift to consolidate, refocus and eliminate the duplication of economic development resources under one umbrella organization, 1Berkshires Strategic Alliance, Inc.

Business Development Assistance

Locally, some of the communities and sub-regions of the Berkshires have economic development authorities or corporations like the Community Development Corporation of South Berkshire (CDCSB), the Lee Community Development Corporation (Lee CDC), the Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation (PERC) or the Pittsfield Economic Development Authority (PEDA.) Through these organizations, communities and business are able to leverage dollars, receive low interest loans and access technical assistance programs to grow the region's economy. An example of this from PERC is the approval of more than \$2,700,000 in business loans to forty-three businesses through its CDBG-funded revolving loan program. All together, these organizations facilitate and partner to support economic development and stability throughout the region.

In Berkshire County, there are regional and state organizations providing a wide array of assistance programs to existing and prospective businesses. On the regional or local level, there are organizations like the Berkshire Regional Office of the Massachusetts Small Business Development Center Network (MSBDC) or the Western Massachusetts Enterprise Fund Incorporated (WMEF). These organizations provide businesses with a wide range of business development assistance that range from start-up business support, business plan development, financial and lending assistance, development of marketing and sales strategies, cash flow analysis and more. A number of achievements made by these organizations in the Berkshire Region include over \$3 million of capital formation through the Berkshire Regional office of MSBDC, approximately \$800,000 in loans to businesses in Berkshire County through WMEF and the facilitated investment of a New Markets Tax Credit deal with Apex Resource Technology in the City of Pittsfield.

At the State level, in 1998, the Massachusetts State Legislature enacted M.G.L. Chapter 23G and merged the Massachusetts Government Land Bank with the Massachusetts Industrial Finance Agency, creating MassDevelopment. Since that time, MassDevelopment has been the state's finance and development authority. Both as a lender and developer, the Agency works with private and public-sector clients to stimulate economic growth by eliminating blight, preparing key sites for development, creating jobs and increasing the state's housing supply. Through a number of MassDevelopment's wide range of finance programs and real estate development services almost \$148 million was directed to 122 projects within Berkshire County from 2000-2010. In the recent 2010 fiscal year, MassDevelopment invested a little over \$12 million to ten projects in Berkshire County.

Brownfields Program

Regionally, there has been a large investment of capital and resources into the identification and assessment of sites containing contaminants from past development. This investment has primarily been through the Berkshire Brownfields Program. The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) has received \$1,595,000 in Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Assessment Program awards. The Berkshire Brownfields Program involves a strong collaboration of several of the largest communities in the region, allowing access to significantly increased funding for the program from EPA and it is repeatedly cited by EPA as a model program in the New England region. Through this program Phase I, II, and III Assessments have been conducted at approximately 30 sites in Berkshire County. On December 15, 2010, the Berkshire Brownfields Committee approved its first loan from the \$1 million revolving loan fund, for \$375,000, to the Community Development Corporation of South Berkshire for the demolition of the buildings on the former New England Log Homes site in Great Barrington.

Pre-Hazard Mitigation Planning

As a region, there are many natural hazards the county must plan and account for. To prepare proactively for these natural hazards, the BRPC has facilitated a regional and local discussion and examination of natural hazards through the development of a Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan for the county. The Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan details the natural hazards facing the region as well as measures to prevent losses due to natural hazards. Two Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) funded hazard mitigation projects, in the Towns of Becket and Tyringham, were completed in the county during the last 10 year.

While most of the hazards encounters tend not to be catastrophic and have a propensity to be more localized or result in temporary affects, it is important to prevent or reduce economic losses due to such events. These localized incidents often are the result of flooding, in which case roads or buildings may be submerged. Flooding, however, is not the only natural hazard the facing the region. Other naturally occurring hazards that impact the county include winter storms, including heavy snow storms and ice, thunderstorms, hurricanes, tornados, dam failures, landslides, wildfires, extreme temperature and drought. It is important for all businesses and residents to periodically review their action plans and evaluate their susceptibility to natural hazards.

Agricultural Economy and Education

The Berkshires have a long history of agriculture. The rich history and prosperity of this industry has been supported by agencies like the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and regional non-profits organizations like Berkshire Grown and the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG). The USDA provides a variety of services to local farmers and agricultural operations. Through Berkshire Grown or NESAWG, local farmers and agricultural producers are working together to create a more sustainable and secure regional food system. This network strives to be one that is economically viable, environmentally sound, socially just and one that produces safe and healthful products.

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Chapter 4: The Action Plan for Economic Prosperity

A Vision Statement for the Berkshires

To establish the Vision Statement for the 2011 Berkshire CEDS, the CEDS Strategy Committee reviewed example CEDS Vision Statements from previous Berkshire CEDS planning efforts (*2001 CEDS* and the *draft 2004 CEDS*), from CEDS from other Massachusetts Regions, a previous economic planning document (*2006 Rural Clusters of Innovation: Berkshires Strategy Project*) and the comments received from the EDA about the 2001 Berkshire CEDS. At their January 11, 2011 meeting, the CEDS Strategy Committee created the Vision Statement for the 2011 Berkshire CEDS.

The Vision for the Berkshires: To create a diverse and robust economy that creates sustainable prosperity for all its residents. While capitalizing on the region's heritage, intellectual vigor, cultural assets, agricultural and natural resources we will encourage innovation, collaboration and entrepreneurial spirit.

The 2011 Berkshire CEDS Vision Statement acknowledges the Berkshires' traditions of industrial innovation and manufacturing, which continue to evolve and support the region to this day, but also understands the need to look towards the future. The vision embraces new opportunities and emerging economies; such as the tourist and service trade and creative economy, which is being fueled by the Berkshires' inviting natural beauty and its renowned music, art, academic and recreational destinations. The Vision statement for the 2011 Berkshire CEDS sets the "framework" for the region's economic prosperity.

With this Vision Statement, the 2011 CEDS Strategy Committee renewed a cooperative regional process of establishing and implementing the region's economic development goals, objectives and activities, while striving for greater economic stability and vitality in the years to come.

Goals and Objectives for the Berkshire CEDS

After considering the region's competitive preparedness and developing a vision statement for the 2011 Berkshire CEDS process, the CEDS Strategy Committee established regional goals and objectives as part of a broader action plan. Through their implementation, these measures will provide a roadmap to guide the actions and priorities of the region. Most importantly, they will further a unified, coordinated regional approach for economic growth and stability. These measures will also build upon the unique assets and abilities of the region to support key clustering industries and emerging entrepreneurial innovators to generate regional and local economic activity and capacity, particularly in underutilized or economically distressed areas.

These goals and objectives will aid in the advancement of the Berkshire Region's ability to evolve into the New Economy. The "New Economy," as defined in *The 2010 State New Economy Index: Benchmarking Economic Transformation in the States*, is a classification of twenty-six indicators, divided into five categories that best capture what the New Economy is. Those five categories include Knowledge Jobs, Globalization, Economic Dynamism, Transformation to a Digital Economy and Technological Innovation Capacity.

The following are the regional goals and objectives for the 2011 Berkshire CEDS:

GOAL 1: TO IMPLEMENT UNIFIED REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES.

Objectives

- Develop mechanisms to guide the implementation of regional economic development initiatives
- Foster and promote regional economic and workforce development
- Strengthen and expand economic cooperation and collaboration regionally and beyond the region's borders
- Develop mechanisms, as appropriate, to respond to unexpected economic losses

GOAL 2: TO ADVANCE THE REGION'S ECONOMIC PROGRESS THROUGH THE USE OF CURRENT AND PERTINENT DATA.

Objectives

- Maintain and expand data and information collection capacity for regional analysis and performance evaluation
- Proactively identify and assess the challenges and changes in the economic and demographic conditions of the region
- Identify and quantify emerging and changing conditions of business and industry

GOAL 3: TO INCREASE THE ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS OF THE REGION IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY.

Objectives

- Proactively retain and expand regionally based and locally emerging businesses and industries
- Provide a comprehensive package of business development resources to the region's established and emerging businesses

- Encourage economic vitality of emerging industry clusters, the creative economy and innovative businesses in the region
- Expand regional capacities to inventory and market sites and buildings for the region's economic development
- Attract new businesses and industries to the region to expand the region's economy

GOAL 4: TO STABILIZE AND STRENGTHEN THE REGION'S WORKFORCE.

Objectives

- Develop a well-educated and highly skilled workforce of all ages to stabilize and expand the regional labor pool
- Align educational offerings and workforce development programs with the evolving needs of the marketplace
- Enhance and position the regional workforce system to align with and support regional job seekers and business needs
- Encourage and support the goals of the Berkshire Compact for Education

GOAL 5: TO ADVANCE HIGH-QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENTS TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT, REDEVELOPMENT AND REVITALIZATION OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT.

Objectives

- Provide a 21st Century capable telecommunications infrastructure throughout the region
- Maintain and upgrade the Region's transportation network
- Support community-driven initiatives to improve urban and town centers to stimulate economic activity
- Build a modern, reliable and affordable energy network
- Ensure the orderly expansion and upgrade of housing and other support facilities to accommodate the region's expanding economic needs

GOAL 6: TO FACILITATE THE REGION'S ASSESSMENT, REMEDIATION AND REDEVELOPMENT OF BUILDINGS AND SITES.

Objectives

- Support regional initiatives and efforts to address contaminated properties in the region
- Create a mechanism for the redevelopment and reuse of underutilized mills and other buildings and sites

Berkshire Project Priority List

One of the EDA requirements for a CEDS is, “A section identifying and prioritizing vital projects, programs and activities that address the region’s greatest needs or that will best enhance the Region’s competitiveness, including sources of funding for past and potential future investments (13 CFR §303.7.) The Berkshire Project Priority list was prepared to meet that requirement. It is an inventory of regional economic development proposals submitted for consideration by citizens, communities and organizations located throughout the region, including proposals submitted by CEDS Strategy Committee members. These proposals represent economic development initiatives, programs and projects, that if implemented would help diversify, stabilize and strengthen the region’s economy. This list should be considered as an initial starting point for an ongoing process of identifying and tracking regionally significant economic development proposals. Although extensive efforts were made to assemble a comprehensive list from across the county, responses to solicitations for projects were uneven, not always representing the breadth of economic development activities occurring in the region or allowing for a full evaluation by CEDS Committee members. In addition, some important proposed projects may have been missed. In developing this list, the CEDS committee stressed that the annual review and update will be an important way to keep identifying, refining and improving the prioritization of regionally significant economic development projects in Berkshire County.

Methodology

Solicitation Process

In October 2010, BRPC solicited citizens, communities and organizations located throughout the region for potential economic development proposals. Early in the solicitation process, the CEDS Strategy Committee emphasized the importance of gathering a broad representation of economic development proposals from throughout the region. In doing so, the submissions of project proposals were not limited or restricted in any form, specifically in terms of ability or eligibility to pursue EDA funding. Instead, project proposals were accepted with an understanding that any form of development, redevelopment and reuse or investment contained some level of economic benefit.

Potential project proponents received a packet containing: a letter briefly explaining the CEDS process and the solicitation process; a 2011 CEDS Demographic Snapshot handout that contained information about recent key trends in the region; and a Project Solicitation form. Proposal proponents were asked to complete and submit the solicitation form and other ancillary materials for each proposal to be considered. After concerns were raised by the CEDS Strategy Committee and project proponents regarding the structure of the Project Solicitation form, it was determined by the CEDS Strategy Committee that all project submissions would be accepted.

During the solicitation process, 32 communities and 18 organizations were contacted for economic development proposals. A public outreach campaign, consisting of three regional public meetings and articles printed in the region’s newspapers, was also used to inform the public of the CEDS process and gather potential project proposals. In total, 82 project proposals were submitted for consideration.

Evaluation Process

To identify regionally significant economic development proposals that address the region’s greatest needs or enhance the region’s economic competitiveness, the CEDS Strategy Committee established evaluation criteria to prioritize the project proposals. The criteria required the CEDS Strategy Committee to identify and evaluate the local and regional economic impacts of each proposal as well as determine whether a project had the ability to meet the goals and objectives of the CEDS. The criteria were developed after the solicitation was distributed, which may have contributed to the uneven nature of some

of the responses. A breakdown of the criteria has been provided below, a more detailed representation of this information can be found in Appendix F.

Economic Significance for the Region

Criteria

- 1) Potential for Job Creation or Retention
- 2) Job Quality
- 3) Training Capacity
- 4) Business/Entrepreneurial Impact: Assistance or Support Programs
- 5) Redevelopment/Reuse Impact: Community or Regional Benefits
- 6) Local Community Impact
- 7) Regional Impacts

2011 CEDS Goals and Objectives

Criteria

- 1) To Implement Unified Regional Economic Development Initiatives.
- 2) To Advance the Region's Economic Progress Through the Use of Current and Pertinent Data.
- 3) To Increase the Economic Competitiveness of the Region in the Global Economy.
- 4) To Stabilize and Strengthen the Region's Workforce.
- 5) To Advance High-Quality Infrastructure and Community Improvements to Support Development, Redevelopment and Revitalization of the Built Environment.
- 6) To Facilitate the Region's Assessment, Remediation and Redevelopment of Buildings and Sites.

To assist the evaluation of the project proposals, the CEDS Strategy Committee received copies of the submitted project proposal information and a summarized description for each proposal. Additionally, project proposals that were found to be similar were consolidated to expedite the evaluation and eliminate redundancies.

After reviewing the initial evaluation results, the CEDS Strategy Committee questioned the completeness of some of the information gathered from project proponents and questioned whether certain assessment criteria were underscored or under emphasized. As a product of this reflection by the CEDS Strategy Committee, six fundamental project characteristics were recognized to assist in identifying regionally significant economic projects. Those six characteristics included Readiness to Proceed; Availability and Current Status of Funds; Project Prerequisite; Potential Impacts or Unintended Consequences; Geographical Dispersion; and Capacity to Implement. To ensure the transparency of the prioritization process the CEDS Strategy Committee decided a comment period should be opened to allow project proponents an opportunity to comment on the initial ranking of their projects.

In response to the comment period, six project proponents responded regarding fifteen project proposals.

After considering the proponent comments and the initial evaluation results, the CEDS Strategy Committee developed a project prioritization structure and a list of the projects to be included on the priority list. This Project Priority List is a framework of projects that have the potential to address the region's economic needs and position the region to diversify, stabilize and strengthen the regional economy.

Project Priority List

Recognizing there are a number of ways specific projects could be viewed regarding regional significance, the prioritized projects were first grouped on a region wide basis and then by categories of economic impact (i.e. Physical Development (by sub-region), Physical and Technology Infrastructure, Programs and Initiatives, and Education and Workforce Development).

After reviewing the eighty-two project proposals against the goals and objectives and agreed-upon evaluation criteria, the CEDS Strategy Committee determined that the following thirty-two projects and programs have the greatest potential to address regional needs and enhance the region's economic competitiveness:

Projects Representing the Greatest Needs Regionally

- Regional Telecommunications Network
- Pittsfield Municipal Airport Safety Improvements
- Regional Highway Access Improvements, including a north-south Limited Access Highway serving central and northern Berkshire County
- Alternative Energy and Energy Infrastructure Improvements
- Regional Passenger Rail Improvements

Projects that Enhance the Region: Physical Development Category

North Sub-Region

- Development of the Greylock Glen Outdoor Recreation & Environmental Education Center
- Former Commonwealth Sprague Site
- Route 8 Corridor Redevelopment

Central Sub-Region

- Life Science Center @ William Stanley Business Park
- William Stanley Business Park
- Crane Stationery Mill Redevelopment
- Hubbard Avenue Development Area
- Sport Complex
- Civic Center/Hotel

South Sub-Region

- New England Log Homes
- River School Redevelopment
- Redevelopment of Great Barrington Fairgrounds
- Monument Mills Area Reuse Planning
- Redevelopment of Historic Great Barrington Firehouse
- Housatonic School Redevelopment

Projects that Enhance the Region: Physical and Technology Infrastructure Category

- West Street Water Line Upgrade
- DownStreet Art Project
- McKay Street Pedestrian Improvements and Parking Garage Restoration

Projects that Enhance the Region: Programs and Initiative Category

- Adaptive Reuse of Mills
- City of Pittsfield Municipal Airport Industrial Park Feasibility Study
- Regionalization of the City of Pittsfield's Municipal Airport
- Berkshire Farm-to-School Feasibility Study
- Regional Economic Development District
- Housatonic Railroad Station Planning Feasibility Study
- Downtown Parking Strategy
- Berkshire Creative Initiative

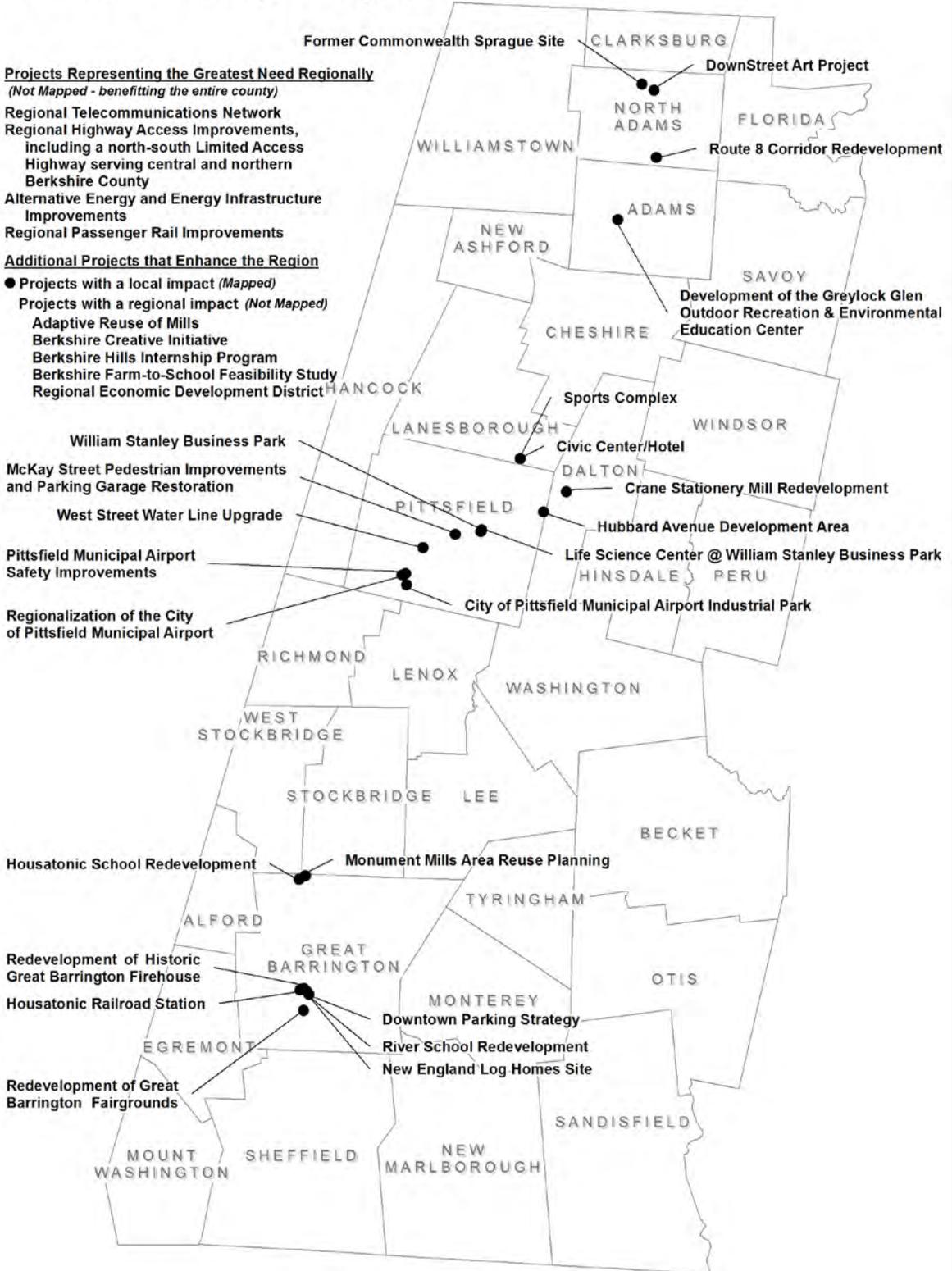
Projects that Enhance the Region: Education and Workforce Development Category

- Berkshire Hills Internship Program
- Berkshire Creative Initiative

While the project narratives, discussed later in this chapter, layout the community or area of impact for each project; the *A Geographic Location of Priority Project* map (Map 6) depicts the general location of each priority project. It should be noted, projects impacting the entire region have been listed in the upper left hand corner of the map.

Map 6: A Geographic Location of Priority Project

CEDS Priority Projects Locations



Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

The following project narratives were developed to outline basic information for each project proposal (i.e. name, location, funding source(s), job information, related linkages and timeframe).

Projects Representing the Greatest Needs Regionally

<p>Project Name: Regional Telecommunications Network</p>
<p>Project Location: Regional</p>
<p>Project Summary: The Regional Telecommunications Network project, previously the WiredWest Community Fiber Network and Regional Broadband Upgrades project proposals, is focused on the modernization of the telecommunication infrastructure throughout the region. This project looks to upgrade and install up-to-date broadband infrastructure through two initiatives, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle-Mile, a WesternMA Connect, Inc. sponsored initiative, looks to advance the region’s telecommunications landscape by installing affordable, reliable and redundant high capacity broadband services. This initiative focuses on the development of high capacity fiber-optic trunk line network to all the communities of the region. • Last-Mile, a WiredWest sponsored initiative, is a community-driven initiative that plans to build a municipal, last-mile, fiber-optic network in western Massachusetts towns unserved and underserved by broadband, and create long-lived, community-owned and operated telecommunications infrastructure. <p>Many communities throughout the county have partial or no access to high speed broadband, while access has become a necessity (socially and economically) in today’s digital world. Those with local internet access are using outdated technologies (dial-up and DSL) that are not robust enough to equip our businesses, students and workers to survive and thrive. The Regional Telecommunications Network project will provide vital access to these telecommunications services to spur economic development, improve public health and safety communication, enhance government efficiency, increase quality educational opportunities, and drive long-term economic growth and quality of life in the region.</p>
<p>Funding Source(s): Federal (National Telecommunications & Information Administration; Rural Utilities Service) grants/loans, Commonwealth (Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) - Massbroadband 123 Initiative), Communities, and Private investments or loans.</p>
<p>Projected Job Creation: The exact number of jobs to be created or retained is unknown at this time. <i>(The build-out and operation of regional telecommunications infrastructure may provide new local employment opportunities; however, specifics about the type, number and specific location of jobs are not yet known. Indirectly, these improvements may contribute to the retention and creation of jobs in companies that rely upon digital infrastructure.)</i></p>
<p>Related Linkages: While this project is in the early stages of development it has already created many developments, financial, planning and other linkages, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massachusetts Broadband Institute – WesternMA, Inc. and WiredWest have developed a close relationship with MBI to ensure that federal funding for the development of broadband infrastructure is made available to western Massachusetts. • Communities – As these projects have developed, many communities throughout western Massachusetts have agreed to facilitate and participate in the initiatives • Organizational Partnerships – Regional planning organizations across western Massachusetts and other organizations have agreed to assist and participate in the initiatives
<p>Timeframe: Since this grouping has two initiatives progressing independently of each other, the timeframe for each initiative has been provided below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle-Mile: Final design and permitting are underway for the 1,338 mile middle-mile fiber optic telecommunications infrastructure providing broadband service to every town and city in

Project Name: Regional Telecommunications Network

western Massachusetts. Funding to construct the network is from the NTIA (\$45.4 million) and \$25.2 million in state bond funds. Construction is to be completed by July 2013.

- **Last-Mile:** The WiredWest initiative can be broken into three distinct phases: 1) Planning, 2) Pilot Projects and 3) Large-scale build-out. The project, as of March 2011, is in the planning phase. As part of this phase WiredWest is working on the following fronts simultaneously: overall planning, establishment of a governance structure, financial planning and strategizing, examining the regional network needs and benefits to ensure a cost-effective network is developed, creating a broad marketing and strategic partnership and implementation of a fundraising plan. Once this phase is completed WiredWest will transition its activities to the development of Pilot Projects, which is expected to happen in late 2011.

Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Project Name: Pittsfield Municipal Airport Safety Improvements
Project Location: City of Pittsfield
Project Summary: The Pittsfield Municipal Airport Safety Improvement project is a safety improvement project to comply with current Federal Aviation Administration design requirements for runway safety areas (RSA). The airport is currently deficient in these areas and the project is based on building compliant RSA's. A second component of this project is to extend the main 5,000 foot runway by 790 feet for a total runway length of 5,790 feet. This project component was incorporated to help accommodate all weather operations of the current fleet of corporate jet aircraft using this facility. Not only will this project help accommodate more all weather and safer operations it also improves the facility to help attract and retain regional corporations that require this mode of transportation and improve connectivity to the national air transportation system.
Funding Source(s): FAA Airport Improvement Program, Massachusetts Department of Transportation - Aeronautics Division and the City of Pittsfield
Projected Job Creation: The exact number of jobs to be created or retained is unknown at this time. <i>(This project is expected to support the retention and potential growth of construction related jobs in the county, specifically in the City of Pittsfield; however, the exact type and number of jobs is not yet known. The build-out and operation of these facility improvements will lay the groundwork for additional improvements at the airport, which may result in additional jobs in the future. An enhanced airport will also contribute to job retention and possible job creation related to companies that need corporate jet service.)</i>
Related Linkages: This is a project designed to improve infrastructure to accommodate aviation demands and is a component and example of multimodal transportation infrastructure improvements to help the region. Other modes of transportation complement the airport improvements such as the South Street in Pittsfield (Rte 7/20) improvements, downtown streetscape and Park Square traffic redesign. A key weakness for the region is transportation access from the region and the airport project is intended to address that weakness for one transportation mode which is very important to some businesses. An enhanced airport will be a factor in the successful development of an industrial park proposed adjacent to the airport in the Airport Master Plan Update.
Timeframe: This project is designed for two phases of construction. The first phase started in October 2010 and as of March, 2011 is approximately 40% complete. This phase is anticipated to be completed late summer 2011. The second phase of the project is being designed and should be put out to bid sometime in April 2011. The second phase of construction is proposed to start up in late summer 2011 and take approximately one year to complete.
Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Project Name: Regional Highway Access Improvements, including a north-south Limited Access Highway serving central and northern Berkshire County

Project Location: Regional

Project Summary: The Regional Highway Access Improvements project, including a north-south Limited Access Highway, is a grouping of highway improvement proposals that would install a wide array of highway improvements throughout the central and north county. These infrastructure projects would improve traffic flow and safety from the I-90 interchange in Lee to the municipalities in central and north Berkshire County. The project proposals in this grouping include:

- **Limited Access Highway** will improve access, relieve traffic congestion and implement safety upgrades through the construction of a new vehicular corridor from the Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90) to municipalities in central and north Berkshire County, similar to Interstate 91 to the east;
- **South Street (Rte. 7/20) Improvements** include replacement of poor pavement, corridor congestion relief, enhancements of side street access and improvements of unsafe locations with signal upgrades and slight geometric changes in the City of Pittsfield;
- **Route 8/Friend Street Intersection Improvements** will correct safety deficiencies and enhance traffic flows in the Town of Adams;
- **Berkshire Medical Center (BMC) Area/North Street Improvements** will address several intersections and roadway deficiencies and improve safety conditions on the east side of the BMC's complex in the City of Pittsfield's downtown and improve regional north-south traffic flow along Route 7;
- **Route 7/20 Corridor Access Management Improvements** will reduce turning conflicts and improve safety conditions in concert with changes to zoning and development bylaws administered by the City of Pittsfield and the Town of Lenox;
- **East Street Reconstruction** project will add capacity and replace deficient sections of roadway between downtown Pittsfield and Merrill Road, one of Pittsfield principal industrial corridors, improving regional traffic flow and facilitating redevelopment of the Williams Stanley Business Park;
- **First Street Improvements** will increase capacity and turning movements on US 7, the main north-south truck route through the City of Pittsfield, while upgrading the Americans with Disabilities Act retrofits, pavement reconstruction, and signal modernization;
- **Route 20 Traffic Improvements (Lee/Lenox) or pursuit of a new I-90 Interchange** seek to alleviate heavy truck traffic, improve walkability, promote economic development, and ease congestion in the Town of Lee's downtown and improve regional access to I-90 (the Massachusetts Turnpike);
- **Westside Connector** project establishes a new connector road between West Housatonic Street (US 20) and West Street in Pittsfield to reduce traffic congestion at critical downtown intersections along Routes 7/20;
- **Route 8 Alternating Passing Lane (Cheshire/Lanesborough)** will add capacity, improve safety, and alleviate congestion to coincide with anticipated increases in north-south travel between the central and northern Berkshires.

Poor access to freeways and other roadway deficiencies are significant limitations to economic development for the Cities of North Adams and Pittsfield as well as other major town centers in the urbanized areas of the central and northern Berkshire County. The lack of a modern highway network in Berkshire County creates congestion, negatively impacting redevelopment and is a significant transportation constraint to the region's economic competitiveness. The construction of a limited access highway and/or other roadway improvements, listed above, would benefit the region's economy through improved access (primarily to freeways) and facilitate the movement of goods, people and services.

Project Name: Regional Highway Access Improvements, including a north-south Limited Access Highway serving central and northern Berkshire County

Funding Source(s): Federal and Commonwealth Transportation Funds

Projected Job Creation: The exact number of jobs to be created or retained is unknown at this time. *(The upgrading of highway access improvements across the region, specifically from north to south, may create local employment opportunities in the construction of those improvements and has the potential to support business growth and job creation as a result of improved access. Specifics about the type, number and specific location of jobs are not yet known.)*

Related Linkages: The installation of these improvements will complement and support all of the region's industries through the facilitation of truck movements and the accommodation of employees and customers to and from places of business. As a result of these upgrades, there is the potential for adjacent commercial properties to be developed or redeveloped. In particular, the Williams Stanley Business Park (Pittsfield) and Greylock Glen (Adams) will be materially advanced with the construction of specific improvement projects (i.e. East Street in Pittsfield, Route 8/Friend Street in Adams or a north-south Limited Access Highway).

Timeframe: Each of the roadway improvements projects is at a different stage of assessment, design, permitting and development; therefore, the implementation of each project is unique. In most instances, each project is pending the appropriation of funding and progression through the Commonwealth and Federal project cues. For a detailed discussion of each projects timetable, readers should consult the most recent Regional Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program or contact the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission.

Most Recent Update: May, 2011

Project Name: Alternative Energy and Energy Infrastructure Improvements

Project Location: Regional

Project Summary: The Alternative Energy and Energy Infrastructure Improvements project is a consolidated project grouping of various energy proposals from throughout the county. It is a multifaceted initiative to:

- Develop a comprehensive Regional Energy Plan and Strategy to create a robust program to maximize energy conservation and generation measures in the County, seeking to conserve where possible and reduce the impact of energy cost fluctuations over time;
- Facilitate and support the development of cost-effective renewable energy generation facilities; and
- Examine the regional energy distribution network to identify potential system upgrades.

The cost of energy within the region is currently and will continue to be a significant limitation to the region's economic growth and stability. Through the utilization of energy conservation techniques and equipment, the development of regionally based renewable energy generation facilities and equipment, and the improvement of the region's energy distribution network, the region will be better situated strategically to compete in today's global economy.

Funding Source(s): Federal and Commonwealth (Department of Energy, Department of Energy Resources), and Private Investments

Projected Job Creation: The exact number of jobs to be created or retained is unknown at this time. *(The build-out and use of fundamental energy equipment, improvements and techniques has the potential to generate jobs in a growth industry and may facilitate business growth through reduced operation costs. Specifics about the type, number and specific location of jobs are not yet known.)*

Related Linkages: The implementation of this initiative will link the region's communities, businesses, educational institutions, the public and organizations. While this initiative is at different levels and stages of implementation it has already created many linkages, such as:

- The creation of an Entry-Level Photovoltaic Training Program at McCann Technical School, administered by the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board
- The installation of public and private alternative energy generation facilities (including on farms) (Berkshire Community College's solar array, Berkshire Wind Power, LLC's wind turbines, Howden Farm solar panels and Pine Island Farm's methane digester)
- The strengthening of the Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) program at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts with the development of the new life science center
- The renewable energy generation program, authorized under the Massachusetts Green Community Act of 2007 and administered through the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources
- The Massachusetts Department of Energy (DOER) awarded eight Berkshire County communities* a total of \$662,000 in ARRA funded Energy Efficiency Community Block Grants (EECBG). The goal of the EECBG projects is to improve energy efficiency in municipal buildings.
- The Berkshire Sustainability Plan being develop by Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC)

There are additional opportunities to train skilled workers and entrepreneurs, particularly in fields related to energy conservation (energy auditors, designers, and tradespeople, as well as suppliers).

Timeframe: The implementation of this regional initiative is ongoing. Most recently, in February 2011, the BRPC launched the Sustainable Berkshires plan. This planning effort will evaluate the region's many facets, including energy, and develop goals, objectives and implementation strategies to

Project Name: Alternative Energy and Energy Infrastructure Improvements

guide the region's future. As a component of the energy aspect, it is anticipated that the three elements mentioned above will be integrated in to the plan. While the regional planning effort is expected to take three years, there are many private and public entities implementing the aspects above.

Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Project Name: Regional Passenger Rail Improvements

Project Location: Regional

Project Summary: The Regional Passenger Rail Improvements project, a project grouping of the East to West and Pittsfield to Connecticut passenger rail projects, will promote public and private investment and upgrades to the region’s rail network to facilitate expanded passenger rail service. The creation of a passenger rail network in the Berkshires, beyond the existing very limited Amtrak service, which connects to other parts of Massachusetts and adjacent economic areas in New York and Connecticut, has great potential to broaden the customer and employee markets for Berkshire County and to overcome the weakness of the region’s highway access. If improvements were made along these routes, existing freight lines, this could facilitate expanded freight capacity and service as well.

Funding Source(s): Federal and Commonwealth Transportation Funds, and Private Investments

Projected Job Creation: The exact number of jobs to be created or retained is unknown at this time. *(The upgrading of the region’s passenger rail network, specifically the east to west and north to south corridors, may create local employment opportunities in the construction of those improvements and has the potential to support business growth and job creation as a result of improved access. Specifics about the type, number and specific location of jobs are not yet known.)*

Related Linkages: The passenger rail improvements are designed to improve the multimodal transportation system of Berkshire County. These improvements will link many communities outside and within the region; thus provide a better means of access for customers, employees and tourists. Station locations can be designed as transit-oriented development hubs which creates significant opportunities for spin-off development.

Timeframe: The proposed enhancement of the rail network is a regional priority; however, before improvements can be designed and constructed feasibility studies are necessary to determine the passenger rail service needs in the county. Therefore, the timing of these upgrades is unknown at this time. *(As of February 2011, the Housatonic Railroad had completed a privately financed market analysis that determined it is feasible to run a privately operated rail passenger service between the Berkshires, western Connecticut and New York City. Housatonic Railroad has also commissioned a research study, through the Center for Creative Community Development at Williams College, to estimate the benefits of the proposed service to communities along the line. The HRR estimates that \$200 million will be needed to improve the track, provide modern stations, procure engines and cars, and make other necessary improvements to implement service. Dependent upon the availability of capital funding, with no operating subsidy necessary, service could be in place within five years.*

The Commonwealth is investing heavily in intermodal and rail improvements along the CSX line from Springfield to Boston in order to improve freight and passenger rail service. This investment in the east to west corridor, if continued to Berkshire County, would improve the freight and passenger service to the Berkshires. There are no immediate initiatives to advance this project.)

Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Projects that Enhance the Region: Physical Development Category (by sub-region)

North Sub-Region

Project Name: Development of the Greylock Glen Outdoor Recreation & Environmental Education Center
Project Location: Town of Adams
Project Summary: The Town of Adams is the designated developer for the Greylock Glen Outdoor Recreation & Environmental Education Center. It is envisioned as a four-season outdoor recreation and environmental education destination. This project is expected to include high quality lodging and conference facilities, a campground (tent sites and cabins), a performing arts amphitheater, an environmental education center, Nordic ski center, and a multi-use trail system. This project represents a significant economic boost for the Town of Adams and Berkshire County as a whole. As a potential element of one of the region's three identified economic clusters, <i>Hospitality and Tourism</i> , the project will support this cluster for Berkshire County and will contribute as a major driver in the ongoing economic recovery. Importantly, the project's strong outdoor recreational focus aligns completely with the most recent marketing research for the Berkshire Visitor's Bureau which indicates that the single most important reason the Berkshires have a strong tourism economy is the outdoor recreational opportunities available in the region. Through its educational components and programming the project will also strengthen the region's growing Educational cluster.
Funding Source(s): Commonwealth, Federal, MassDevelopment, and Private and Public Investments
Projected Job Creation: This project is expected to generate an estimated 138 full-time jobs. The labor forces expected from this project include construction, education, retail trade, and leisure and hospitality. <i>(As this project proposal advances it is anticipated this number may change)</i>
Related Linkages: Situated at the base of Mount Greylock, this project would enhance visitors' use of the Mount Greylock State Reservation. It would also present another destination in northern Berkshire, strengthening the tourism draw in that portion of the county. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amphitheater is intended to provide a new type of venue for performing arts in northern Berkshire County, with MassMOCA proposed as the operator, expanding their ability to hold larger shows in varied settings.• The Environmental Education Center is expected to be operated as a facility of MCLA and allow an expansion of the fairly new Environmental Program at the College.• By adding a significant tourist destination in Adams, it is expected that the visitors' shopping and dining needs will be met in the downtown, strengthening reinvestment efforts there.• The Town of Adams is an identified ETA under the Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP), which makes certain sites within the community eligible for a number of development incentives and programs.• Greylock Glen is an identified 43D (see Appendix B for definition) site, which provides a transparent and efficient process for municipal permitting, guarantees local permitting decisions on priority development sites within 180-days, increases the visibility of the community and targeted development sites, and gives the Town competitive advantages in obtaining various support, including funding, from the Commonwealth.
Timeframe: The Site has been designated a 43D Expedited Permitting Site. MEPA certificate is complete. Infrastructure designer selection is underway with selection complete by end of April. The Town, with support of MassDevelopment, is preparing solicitations for private developers for the hotel and campground. The trail system is designed and can be constructed (state funding committed) when first private developer partner is committed. Needed improvements at Rte. 8/Friend Street intersection will be under design before June with designer selection already complete; design contract waiting for MassDOT contract finalization with Town; funding available in FY 2012 for construction.

Project Name: Development of the Greylock Glen Outdoor Recreation & Environmental Education Center

Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Project Name: Former Commonwealth Sprague Site
Project Location: City of North Adams
Project Summary: The former Commonwealth Sprague Site, on Brown Street, is a site ripe for redevelopment. All structures on the property have been demolished, however, it is expected that certain infrastructure (utility) upgrades would be necessary to develop the site. The property is zoned for the development of industrial type uses.
Funding Source(s): Federal, Business Development Loans and Private Investments
Projected Job Creation: The exact numbers of jobs to be created or retained are unknown. <i>(No specific uses have been identified for the redevelopment of this site; therefore, specifics about the type, number and specific location of jobs are not yet known. The site's redevelopment would make use of an underutilized property within the community and potentially create new local employment opportunities or even spur the reinvestment in adjacent properties.)</i>
Related Linkages: This project site, depending upon the redeveloped use, has the potential to be linked with the adjacent business and nearby downtown North Adams. This site is also a possible location for the extension of the Ashuwillticook Trail, a multi-use bicycle-pedestrian trail. Since the project property is adjacent to the Hoosic River, the redevelopment of this site will be linked to the Hoosic River Revival initiative.
Timeframe: The timeframe in which this site will be redevelopment is unknown. <i>(Until a prospective business or developer is identified, with interest in this site, this project's timeframe for redevelopment will be unknown.)</i>
Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Project Name: Route 8 Corridor Redevelopment

Project Location: City of North Adams

Project Summary: The Route 8 Corridor Redevelopment project, a project grouping, is a multi-pronged redevelopment proposal to better use underutilized sites adjacent to Route 8. The project proposals in this grouping include:

- **Gravel Bank Redevelopment** is a 13.4 acre site slated for redevelopment as a commercial and/or industrial site. This site has been identified as a possible location for a new Super Wal-Mart; however, it has not been developed yet.
- **North Adams Plaza Redevelopment** is a 26.7 acre site slated for redevelopment as a commercial and/or industrial site. This site has been identified as a possible location for a new Lowes; however, it has not been developed to date.
- **Old Route 8 Corridor Improvements** is a right-of-way improvements project. This project includes the upgrading of paving, the widening of the roadway (to meet modern standards) and utility improvements. If completed, this project has the potential to improve access to the Gravel Bank site and will allow development of underutilized properties surrounding the road corridor.

These sites, evaluated as elements of the larger Route 8 Corridor Access Management Plan, coupled with new signalization in various locations along Route 8, have the potential to generate capacity and interest for development and redevelopment.

Funding Source(s): Private Investments and Federal Highway Funds

Projected Job Creation: The exact numbers of jobs to be created or retained are unknown. *(Super Wal-Mart and Lowes have shown interest in the Gravel Bank and North Adams Plaza sites; however, neither business has committed to developments at those sites. Therefore, until a specific use is identified for the redevelopment of these sites the specifics about the type, number and specific location of jobs will not be known. The redevelopment of these sites would make use of an underutilized property within the community. There is the possibility for the creation of new local employment opportunities and even reinvestment in adjacent properties.)*

Related Linkages: Discussions have been initiated at the community and regional level to secure Federal Transportation monies for the development of the new access road.

Timeframe: The timeframe in which this site will be redevelopment is unknown. *(The Gravel Bank and North Adams Plaza sites continue to be “shovel-ready” development sites. While Wal-Mart and Lowes have shown interest in developing and have gone through the MEPA permit approval process, neither company has committed to breaking ground. Until a prospective business or developer is identified, with interest in these sites, the timeframe for redevelopment will be unknown.*

Prior to construction of the Old Route 8 Corridor improvements, developments will need to be identified for the adjacent properties. Unutilized earmarked Federal Highway funds have been identified as a potential mechanism to finance the upgrades.)

Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Central Sub-Region

Project Name: Life Science Center @ William Stanley Business Park
Project Location: City of Pittsfield
Project Summary: This project proposes to construct and create a “Life Science Center” for training of technicians in the areas of bio-tech and semi-conductors clean room technology and to house a company or companies in related fields. The size of the facility to house this development is unknown at this time.
Funding Source(s): Federal and Commonwealth Funds, Definitive Economic Development Agreement (DEDA) w/General Electric funds and Private Investments
Projected Job Creation: It is estimated that the development of this center would generate 25 full-time positions. <i>(As this project proposal advances it is anticipated this number may change.)</i>
Related Linkages: Since this project may be developed on a parcel that once was part of the former General Electric Transformer Plant site in Pittsfield, this project has many linkages including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Pittsfield Economic Development Authority, the designated organization to administer the DEDA• The William Stanley Business Park• Nuclea Biomarkers LLC, the only Berkshire County biotech related business has a letter-of-intent with William Stanley Business Park indicating it will locate its growing business in the “Life Sciences” building.• Berkshire Community College wants to locate a training facility in the building for training future employees in the Life Sciences businesses as well as Clean Room technology for the microchip industry.• With the development of AMD’s Chip Plant in Malta, NY (north of Albany), it is expected that there will be considerable business spin-off and supporting services growth throughout the broad region surrounding the plant, including Berkshire County.• <i>Economic Development Area (ETA):</i> The City of Pittsfield is an identified ETA under the Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP), which makes certain sites within the community eligible for a number of development incentives and programs.• <i>Chapter 43D:</i> In the City of Pittsfield, the William Stanley Business Park is an identified 43D site, which provides a transparent and efficient process for municipal permitting, guarantees local permitting decisions on priority development sites within 180-days, and increases visibility of the community and targeted development sites and gives the City competitive advantages in obtaining various support, including funding, from the Commonwealth.
Timeframe: Development of the facility is expected in early 2012.
Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Project Name: William Stanley Business Park
Project Location: City of Pittsfield
Project Summary: The William Stanley Business Park project proposes to redevelop 52-acres of the former General Electric Transformer Plant site, in Pittsfield, into a business/industrial park. Twenty six acres of the site have been prepared for redevelopment and are “shovel ready.” The remaining portion of the site is pending funding for the completion of engineering designs and the installation of infrastructure. To direct redevelopment efforts at the site the William Stanley Business Park of the Berkshire Master Plan was developed in 2003.
Funding Source(s): Definitive Economic Development Agreement (DEDA) w/General Electric and Public and Private Investments
Projected Job Creation: The exact numbers of jobs to be created or retained are unknown. <i>(It is difficult to identify the exact number of jobs to be created until a specific use is identified. There is the potential for jobs to be created or retained; however, specifics about the type, number and specific location of jobs are unknown at this time.)</i>
<p>Related Linkages: Since this project is being developed on a parcel that once was part of the former General Electric Transformer Plant site in Pittsfield, this project has many linkages including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pittsfield Economic Development Authority, the designated organization to administer the DEDA • The proposed Life Science Center • The East Street Widening Project, one of the elements of the Regional Highway Access Improvements project above, will support this project through enhanced access and a visually improved gateway. Other regional access improvement projects will also increase the viability of the site for light manufacturing uses. • <i>Economic Development Area (ETA):</i> The City of Pittsfield is an identified ETA under the Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP), which makes certain sites within the community eligible for a number of development incentives and programs. • <i>Chapter 43D:</i> In the City of Pittsfield, the William Stanley Business Park is an identified 43D site, which provides a transparent and efficient process for municipal permitting, guarantees local permitting decisions on priority development sites within 180-days, and increases visibility of the community and targeted development sites and gives the City competitive advantages in obtaining various support, including funding, from the Commonwealth.
Timeframe: The installation of infrastructure is pending issuance of a request for bids to evaluate soil conditions and determine the amount of remediation required so that the second half (26 acres) of the Park can be made ready for redevelopment by interested businesses, due to be issued in the second half of 2011.
Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Project Name: Crane Stationery Mill Redevelopment
Project Location: Town of Dalton
Project Summary: The Crane Stationery Mill Redevelopment project is an adaptive reuse proposal to utilize a 100,000 sf. multi-story mill being vacated by Crane & Company. There have been a number of developers interested in converting the structure into commercial (incubator) and residential space.
Funding Source(s): Federal and Commonwealth Funds, and Public and Private Investments
Projected Job Creation: The exact numbers of jobs to be created or retained are unknown. <i>(It is difficult to identify the exact number of jobs to be created until a specific use is identified. There is the potential for jobs to be created or retained; however, specifics about the type, number and specific location of jobs are unknown at this time.)</i>
Related Linkages: This project, the adaptive reuse of a mill, has the potential to re-link and reuse a structure that would otherwise become vacant or underutilized. This project may be able to be used as a pilot for the redevelopment of other vacant mill structures throughout the county. Depending upon the redeveloped use this project may generate linkages within and outside the community.
Timeframe: The relocation of the Crane Stationery facility, currently in the building, is still pending. Until Crane relocates, the facility will not be available for redevelopment. In the interim, Crane & Company has signed an agreement with a local developer for the adaptive reuse of the structure.
Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Project Name: Hubbard Avenue Development Area

Project Location: City of Pittsfield and Town of Dalton

Project Summary: The Hubbard Avenue Development Area project, a project grouping, is a development/redevelopment area that contains multiple project proposals that are interlinked. The project proposals in this grouping include:

- **Hubbard Avenue Improvements**, a roadway improvement project, involves limited straightening, road widening along the entire corridor, turn lane enhancements, a replacement railroad bridge, and potentially a widening the bridge over the Housatonic River and related intersection.
- **Ashuelot Park Development**, a 56.15 acre site, is an identified development area in the Town of Dalton for an industrial park. The site contains an existing 275,000 sf. facility (209,000 sf. of manufacturing space and 66,000 sf. of office space) and the rest is undeveloped. A site plan laying out the build-out of the park and a Runoff Water Management Plan has been completed for the site. This property is zoned Industrial. Crane and Company is intended to consolidate several operations, including that currently in the Stationary Mill (above) into a portion of the existing facility.
- **Schnopps-Roberts Site**, a 38.6 acre site, is another identified development area in the Town of Dalton. Conceptually, the site is envisioned to be a business/industrial subdivision. Two initial planning studies for the build-out of the site have been completed.

These projects are interconnected because without a certain level of roadway improvements to Hubbard Avenue, facilitating the anticipated traffic volumes of development, the complete build-out of the Ashuelot Park Development and the Schnopps-Robert Site projects, as well as other undeveloped or underutilized properties along Hubbard Avenue, cannot be achieved.

Funding Source(s): Federal and Commonwealth Funds, and Public and Private Investments

Projected Job Creation: The exact numbers of jobs to be created or retained are unknown. *(It is difficult to identify the exact number of jobs to be created until a specific use is identified. There is the potential for jobs to be created or retained; however, specifics about the type, number and specific location of jobs are unknown at this time.)*

Related Linkages: The following is a listing of the development, financial, planning and other linkages related to this project grouping:

- *Economic Development Area (ETA):* The Town of Dalton is an identified ETA under the Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP), which makes certain sites within the community eligible for a number of development incentives and programs.
- *Chapter 43D:* In the Town of Dalton, the Ashuelot Park and Schnopps-Robert sites are identified 43D sites, which provides a transparent and efficient process for municipal permitting, guarantees local permitting decisions on priority development sites within 180-days, and increases visibility of the community and targeted development sites and gives the Town competitive advantages in obtaining various support, including funding, from the Commonwealth.
- *BJ's Development:* The BJ's development, under construction along the western side of Hubbard Avenue in Pittsfield, will require a fully functional Hubbard Avenue to achieve full success. It too will affect traffic circulation and strain the existing infrastructure along Hubbard Avenue and the larger development area.
- *Hubbard Avenue Traffic Study:* The Hubbard Avenue Traffic Study examined the development capacity and infrastructure improvements that would be necessary to accommodate three proposed development scenarios. Additional work is necessary to finalize that study. Improvements to Hubbard Avenue are included in the draft 2011 Berkshire

Project Name: Hubbard Avenue Development Area

Regional Transportation Plan.

- *Biomass Energy Plant:* A biomass company is examining the possibility of developing a biomass energy plant in Ashuelot Park.
- Regional access improvement projects will increase the viability of this area for light manufacturing uses.

Timeframe: The timeframe for full build-out of the Ashuelot Park and Schnopp-Roberts development sites are unknown. *(A number of prospective businesses or developers have been interested in the sites. Until certain improvements are made to access roads (Hubbard Avenue) into the sites, the development capacity is limited.*

The Hubbard Avenue Improvements project is listed in the Regional Transportation Plan. However, it needs some additional planning, design and funding before the upgrades can be made. With the scarcity of state and federal transportation funding, alternative funding mechanisms may need to be considered, such as impact fees, establishment of district improvement fees, or issuance of local bonds.)

Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Project Name: Sports Complex
Project Location: Town of Lanesborough
Project Summary: The Sports Complex project, which is in a conceptual stage of development, is a development proposal looking to construct an enclosed sporting complex containing an estimated 450,000 sf of synthetic surfaced playing fields to accommodate year round sporting activities and events.
Funding Source(s): The funding sources for this project's development are unknown. <i>(As this proposal develops beyond the conceptual stage, it is anticipated that this project would utilize public and private funds.)</i>
Projected Job Creation: While this proposal is only in the conceptual stage of development, the project proponent has estimated that 20 full-time positions may be created because of the project's development. <i>(As this project proposal advances it is anticipated this number may change)</i>
Related Linkages: Depending upon the final location of this facility there is the potential for many linkages.
Timeframe: The timeframe for this project's development is unknown. <i>(Until a location and private partners are identified this project has no set timeframe.)</i>
Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Project Name: Civic Center/Hotel
Project Location: Town of Lanesborough
Project Summary: The Civic Center/Hotel project proposes to develop a multi-use regional convention and performance center, IMAX theater, hotel, community center and parking deck. The total project cost estimated for this project is \$ 34.5 million.
Funding Source(s): The funding sources for this project's development are unknown. <i>(As this proposal develops beyond the conceptual stage, it is anticipated that this project would utilize public and private funds.)</i>
Projected Job Creation: While this proposal is only in the conceptual stage of development, the project proponent has estimated that 300 full-time positions may be created because of the project's development. <i>(As this project proposal advances it is anticipated this number may change)</i>
Related Linkages: Depending upon the final location of this facility there is the potential for many linkages.
Timeframe: The timeframe for this project's development is unknown. <i>(The project is currently a concept; however, the project proponents are actively pursuing the development of site plans, cost estimates and are working to secure funding and permits.)</i>
Most Recent Update: April, 2011

South Sub-Region

Project Name: New England Log Homes (NELH)
Project Location: Town of Great Barrington
Project Summary: This project is a redevelopment proposal of the abandoned and contaminated former NELH brownfield site in downtown Great Barrington. The redevelopment proposal includes the remediation of known contaminants, development of mixed-use commercial and housing space, and the creation of a public gathering space along the Housatonic River. The total project site encompasses 8 acres of land and is estimated to cost \$25 million.
Funding Source(s): Depending upon the stage or project component the NELH project has an intricate funding package consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Site contamination assessment: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection;• First Stage Redevelopment, Demolition: U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation and Berkshire Regional Planning Commission/Berkshire Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund• Remediation and Development: MassDevelopment, public and private affordable housing development sources, private commercial development sources As this project develops it is anticipated that additional funding will be necessary to complete the build-out of the site.
Projected Job Creation: While the uses ultimately developed for this project have not been determined, there are a number of uses that have been considered. The project proponent has estimated that 35 jobs may be created because of this project's development. (<i>As this project proposal advances it is anticipated this number may change.</i>)
Related Linkages: Through this project's development there are many linkages that have and will be developed including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NELH & River School Project will create over \$55 million of investment on Bridge Street• NELH & River School Project will expand the downtown corridor and create a link between Main Street and the Housatonic River Walk
Timeframe: This project is a multiphase redevelopment proposal. As of April 2011, the project was in Phase I - Demolition. Demolition is expected to begin in June 2011. Phase II, which is Remediation and Development, is anticipated to start in 2012-2014.
Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Project Name: River School Redevelopment
Project Location: Town of Great Barrington
Project Summary: This project is a redevelopment proposal of the former Searles/Bryant School complex in Downtown Great Barrington. The redevelopment proposal includes 40 housing units (40% are below \$250,000 and 25% are statutorily affordable), 17,000 sf. of commercial space and public space with integrated river walk. The total project costs are firmly estimated at \$20 million.
Funding Source(s): Recovery Zone Facility Bond, Massachusetts Housing, Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), Market Rate Debt and Private Investment
Projected Job Creation: It is estimated that 125 jobs will be created. Phase I: Bryant School Renovation is currently underway. It will contain Iredale Mineral Cosmetics' new Corporate Headquarters and will add 50 full-time jobs in 2011-2012. The remaining 75 jobs will be created over the next 3-5 years. <i>(As this project proposal advances it is anticipated this number may change.)</i>
<p>Related Linkages: This project's development will create linkages with the establishment of a mixed-use, mixed income 24-hour downtown community in the heart of Great Barrington. Through this project there are other linkages that will be created including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iredale Mineral Cosmetics will be able to expand within the community and provide 50 additional living wage jobs • The retail component will allow locally owned businesses to expand downtown • The creation of a diversified mix of housing options will allow residents to be within walking distance of downtown and living-wage jobs • River School Redevelopment and NELH project will create over \$55 million of investment on Bridge Street • River School Redevelopment and NELH Project will expand the downtown corridor and create a link between Main Street and the Housatonic River Walk
Timeframe: This project is currently in Phase I: Bryant School Renovation. Expected completion date is December 2011.
Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Project Name: Redevelopment of Great Barrington Fairgrounds
Project Location: Town of Great Barrington
Project Summary: This project includes the redevelopment of the 57-acre historic Great Barrington Fairground and racetrack for mixed-use commercial, agricultural incubator, housing and open space/recreation uses.
Funding Source(s): Market Rate Debt, Private Investment and Public: agricultural (Agricultural Preservation Restriction), open space/recreation and housing development subsidies
Projected Job Creation: It is estimated that this project will create 20+ jobs. <i>(As this project proposal advances it is anticipated this number may change.)</i>
Related Linkages: This project has significant linkages to local agriculture, local food production and local food consumption, both retail and private. It has the potential to be a flagship CSA, increasing the capacity of local and regional CSA's extending seasons and increasing storage capacity. A large educational component may be developed as well. This project proposal has also generated business, entrepreneurial and technical assistance relationships with the Berkshire Co-op Market, one of the largest employers in Great Barrington. A programmatic and product relationship with Berkshire Hills Regional School District and Southern Berkshire Regional School District, Fairview Hospital, Community Health Program (nutrition) and the Nutrition Center is also envisioned.
Timeframe: The property affected by this project is in the process of being acquired. Following acquisition the predevelopment and program planning will begin in 2011-2012. The project is anticipated to be completed in 2013.
Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Project Name: Monument Mills Area Reuse Planning

Project Location: Town of Great Barrington

Project Summary: The Monument Mills Area Reuse Planning initiative, a Town based effort, looks to work with various mill owners, interested developers and the community to develop a comprehensive redevelopment/reuse plan for underutilized mills throughout the village of Housatonic. Through this planning process, the Town would examine potential uses, infrastructure needs and deficiencies, permitting and financing options to facilitate the redevelopment of approximately 250,000 sf. of underdeveloped space.

Funding Source(s): The funding sources for this planning effort are unknown. *(This planning effort is estimated to cost \$75,000 to \$100,000. As this proposal develops beyond the conceptual and planning stages it is anticipated that this project would utilize public and private funds.)*

Projected Job Creation: This project will study the possibility of redeveloping underutilized mills within the community; therefore, the direct creation or retention of jobs is unknown. *(It is expected that the redevelopment or reuse of vacant mills would create or retain jobs.)*

Related Linkages: Recently the Town used Community Development Block Grant funds to construct infrastructure improvement in Housatonic. Redevelopment of the mills would fully utilize those public investments. In addition, there has been substantial discussion about more fully utilizing Ramsdell Library as a focal point for Housatonic.

Timeframe: Private interests are conducting initial due diligence now. The comprehensive planning effort will not be initiated until a funding source is identified.

Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Project Name: Redevelopment of Historic Great Barrington Firehouse

Project Location: Town of Great Barrington

Project Summary: This project is the adaptive re-use and historic renovation of the former Great Barrington Fire House into a vocational education and job-training center. The new facility will provide young people and members of the community with educational training, jobs and career counseling. It is directed at being a catalyst for employment growth in Berkshire County. Vocational programs will include wood working, construction trades, high-tech and the culinary arts. In addition, the new facility will house a restaurant with an enlarged kitchen to be utilized for culinary classes. The Great Barrington Historical Society and Museum will occupy approximately 2,500 sf. in the renovated building.

Funding Source(s): Federal and State Historic Tax Credits, Market Rate Debt and Private Investment

Projected Job Creation: It is estimated that 13 permanent jobs will be created based on square footage build-out conventions. *(As this project proposal advances, it is anticipated this number may change.)*

Related Linkages: The project will create linkages with local area businesses, educational institutions and non-profit agencies including:

- Southern Berkshire Regional School District
- Berkshire Hills Regional School District
- Lenox School District
- Bard College at Simon's Rock
- Berkshire Community College
- Railroad Street Youth Project
- Local Businesses
- Local Artisans

Timeframe: This project is expected to begin in September 2011 and be completed in 2013.

Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Project Name: Housatonic School Redevelopment
Project Location: Town of Great Barrington
Project Summary: The Housatonic School Redevelopment project (or Housatonic Commons Project) is the adaptive re-use of the former Housatonic Elementary School into a mix-use complex with 11 affordable housing units and 6,000 sf. of commercial/non-profit space for organizations (i.e. BRIDGE, Town Satellite Offices/Daycare Facility, etc.). The project will provide affordable workforce housing options for residents of southern Berkshire County, which is one of the largest impediments to attracting and retaining employees and overall workforce in southern Berkshire County.
Funding Source(s): Mass Housing, Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the Federal Home Loan Bank and Market Rate Debt
Projected Job Creation: The project will create approximately 15 new jobs in Social Services/Childcare and Cultural Competencies (BRIDGE) in the village of Housatonic. <i>(As this project proposal advances it is anticipated this number may change.)</i>
Related Linkages: The rehabilitation/re-use of the former school building will connect and improve the neighborhood character by provide much needed community facilities. This project will be intricately linked to the larger redevelopment of Housatonic Village with the possibility of future passenger rail service.
Timeframe: The preliminary engineering and feasibility study for the project has been completed. The project proponents are working with the Town and local community groups to determine exact mix/ratio of residential, commercial and community space (6 month process), due to be completed in August 2011.
Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Projects that Enhance the Region: Physical and Technology Infrastructure Category

Project Name: West Street Water Line Upgrade
Project Location: City of Pittsfield
Project Summary: The purpose of this project is to enhance and enable the growth of future and proposed industries along the West Housatonic Street corridor and to increase the capacity of water flow to the southwest section of the City of Pittsfield. The City's Master Plan, updated in 2009, identified the West Housatonic corridor as a critical corridor for future industrial growth. The West Street Water Line project will include the replacement of 5,000 ft. of existing 10-inch water main pipe with a 16-inch pipe. The increased pipe size will improve capacity to the corridor and the southwest section of the City through connections along Fort Hill Road.
Funding Source(s): City of Pittsfield Capital Budget and Economic Development Administration (EDA)
Projected Job Creation: The project is expected to create an estimated 39 jobs and retain another 22 positions immediately. The access and availability of adequate water capacity has hampered the operation of a water bottling plant and economic development in the southwest section of the City. <i>(As this project proposal advances and new development prospects emerge it is anticipated the number of jobs created and retained will increase.)</i>
Related Linkages: This project, as designed, will improve water capacity and pressures in the entire southwest section of the City of Pittsfield, including the West Housatonic Street corridor. Related linkages include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expansion of Ice River Springs Bottling Plant on Route 20 (growth of production and jobs)• Facilitation of the development of vacant industrial land on Route 20, West Housatonic Street• Further expansion of Interprint, Hancock Shaker Village and other businesses• Access \$1,030,000 in City capital budget funds will be used to match Economic Development Administration funding• Private investment by manufacturers, cultural facilities and other businesses in the southwest section of Pittsfield
Timeframe: The project is designed and ready for the bid process to commence, following approval of funding from EDA.
Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Project Name: DownStreet Art Project
Project Location: City of North Adams
Project Summary: The DownStreet Art program is a public art initiative designed to revitalize downtown North Adams, by harnessing existing arts organizations and events and transforming vacant and open spaces into arts destinations. The DownStreet Art program will be used to define the City of North Adams as a cultural haven.
Funding Source(s): This program, of Massachusetts College of Liberal Art's Berkshire Cultural Resource Center, is supported by the City of North Adams, Massachusetts Cultural Council, Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MassMOCA) and its partners. The program is also made possible through lead sponsorship support provided by Greylock Federal Credit Union and Investment Group and other private organizations and businesses.
Projected Job Creation: The exact numbers of jobs to be created or retained are unknown. <i>(This program supports the artist industry in North Adams and Berkshire County at large. Indirectly, this program may spur the creation or retention of jobs in downtown business as well; however, specifics about the type, number and specific location of jobs are unknown at this time.)</i>
Related Linkages: The project will create linkages with local area businesses, educational institutions and non-profits agencies including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts • MassMOCA • The City of North Adams • Businesses • The Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute • The North Adams Public School District • Berkshire Hills Internship Program
Timeframe: This program is ongoing.
Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Project Name: McKay Street Pedestrian Improvements & Parking Garage Restoration
Project Location: City of Pittsfield
Project Summary: The purpose of this project is to restore and upgrade the 15+ year old McKay Street parking structure and improve key pedestrian routes from the parking facility to Pittsfield's Central Business District. The parking structure provides parking for employees, customers and visitors throughout downtown Pittsfield. The lack of upgrades to the parking structure and degrading pedestrian infrastructure impedes efforts to attract new business, specifically to the former Kay-Bee Toys building, and will help to enable the growth of future and proposed businesses in downtown. The City's Urban Center Growth District, established in 2008, includes the parking facility and pedestrian improvement project areas. This project is a key component of the City's economic development strategy to make the City more attractive to businesses, residents and visitors.
Funding Source(s): City of Pittsfield Capital Budget and Economic Development Administration
Projected Job Creation: The exact number of jobs to be created or retained is unknown at this time. <i>(The upgrading of the City's parking garage and pedestrian infrastructure may create local employment opportunities in the construction of those improvements and has the potential to support business growth and job creation as a result of improved access. Specifics about the type, number and specific location of jobs are not yet known.)</i>
Related Linkages: This project, as designed, will improve pedestrian and vehicle access for employees, residents and visitors of downtown Pittsfield. Related linkages include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Downtown Pittsfield Revitalization Project • Facilitation the attraction of tenants and business growth of vacant properties in downtown, specifically the former Kay-Bee Toys building • Private investment by property owners, cultural facilities and other businesses in downtown Pittsfield
Timeframe: The project is designed and ready for the bid process to commence, following allocation of funding sources for the restoration costs.
Most Recent Update: May, 2011

Projects that Enhance the Region: Programs and Initiatives Category

Project Name: Adaptive Reuse of Mills
Project Location: Regional
Project Summary: The Adaptive Reuse of Mills initiative is a regional proposal to address the vacant and underutilized mills throughout the county. This initiative would work with various mill owners, interested developers and communities to develop a comprehensive redevelopment/reuse program for the redevelopment of mills in each community. Through this planning process communities would examine potential uses, infrastructure needs and deficiencies, permitting, and financing options to facilitate the redevelopment of mills.
Funding Source(s): The funding sources for this planning effort are unknown. <i>(As each mill project develops beyond the conceptual and planning stages it is anticipated that public and private funds would be utilized for implementation.)</i>
Projected Job Creation: This project will study the possibility of redeveloping underutilized mills throughout the county; therefore, the creation or retention of jobs at this stage will be limited and is unknown. <i>(While it is expected that the redevelopment or reuse of vacant mills would create or retain jobs, until specific uses are identified the type, number and specific location of jobs are unknown at this time.)</i>
Related Linkages: Through the implementation of this project the needs and interests of communities throughout the county will be connected to the redevelopment plans for underutilized mills. There is also the potential for linkages with local area businesses, educational institutions and non-profit agencies. Inasmuch as many of the mills are in village centers or settled areas and neighborhood, revitalization of these mill buildings will contribute to overall community / neighborhood revitalization. Given the industrial heritage of these sites, the Berkshire Brownfields Program will be integral in assessing potential contamination and developing any necessary clean-up plans. The Berkshire Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund is a potential funding source for actual clean-up of sites.
Timeframe: This planning initiative will not be undertaken until funding and regional partners are identified.
Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Project Name: City of Pittsfield Municipal Airport Industrial Park Feasibility Study
Project Location: City of Pittsfield
Project Summary: This project will commission a master planning process for the development of a 25-30 acre industrial area to the south of the Pittsfield Municipal Airport on Tamarack Road. The project will include site investigation, site plan development and the design of infrastructure comprised of an access road, sewer and water utilities. The Pittsfield Municipal Airport Industrial Park project is identified in the Airport Master Plan Update (AMPU). Under the AMPU, the airport is required to identify future projects; this is a requirement of the Federal Aviation Administration.
Funding Source(s): The funding sources for this planning effort are unknown. <i>(It is anticipated that this project will require the use of public funds to initiate the study.)</i>
Projected Job Creation: This project will study the possibility of developing an industrial park; therefore, the creation or retention of jobs is unknown. <i>(It is difficult to identify the exact number of jobs to be created until specific uses are identified. There is the potential for jobs to be created or retained; however, specifics about the type, number and specific location of jobs are unknown at this time.)</i>
Related Linkages: Through this project's development there are many linkages that have and will be developed including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect future aviation demands and business needs with the development plans at the airport • Complement the runway improvement activities being implemented at the airport • The development of an industrial park at the airport would also complement other transportation improvements called for in the Regional Highway Access Improvements project, most specifically the Rte. 7/20 Corridor Access Improvements and the Route 20 Traffic Improvements (Lee/Lenox) or Pursuit of new I-90 Interchange
Timeframe: The next AMPU project is anticipated for 2013, after the current airport improvement and expansion project is completed.
Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Project Name: Regionalization of the City of Pittsfield's Municipal Airport
Project Location: City of Pittsfield
Project Summary: The City of Pittsfield wants a planning study to examine the possibility of regionalizing the City's municipal airport. The airport provides the only facility in the Berkshire County region that can accommodate general aviation and Class CII corporate jet aircraft. The project would help identify users of the facility, frequency and origin and destination information. This study will help determine the feasibility of pursuing regionalization of this facility.
Funding Source(s): The funding sources for this study are unknown. <i>(It is anticipated that this project will require the use of public funds to initiate the study.)</i>
Projected Job Creation: This project will study the possibility of regionalizing the Pittsfield Municipal Airport; therefore, the creation or retention of jobs will be limited or is unknown. <i>(Until the study is completed, it is unknown whether jobs at or related to the airport would be affected.)</i>
Related Linkages: The regionalization of the airport would help the financial challenges associated with accommodating increased use of the facility and provide opportunities for regional communities to shape the direction of the airport to meet regional aviation demands.
Timeframe: No timeline has been established for this project so it is unknown when the study will be commissioned.
Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Project Name: Berkshire Farm-to-School Feasibility Study
Project Location: Regional
<p>Project Summary: The Berkshire Farm-to-School feasibility study has three primary objectives, which include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess Berkshire County’s public schools’ food budgets, food facilities, purchasing process, and most popular foods to analyze potential demand for food producers in the county to provide products. 2. Evaluate Berkshire County’s farmers, farmland, and farm products to analyze the potential for Berkshire County farms to supply food to the region’s schools. 3. Review Berkshire County’s food processing industries and infrastructure to analyze the capacity to receive food “off the truck” from farms and process/package it to specifications of school food service. <p>This study would also assess the potential market opportunities for farms, jobs to be created or retained, improvements to school food programs, the capacity and need for food processing industries and the potential growth in the Berkshire County agricultural economy.</p>
Funding Source(s): The funding sources for this study are unknown. <i>(It is anticipated that this project may require the use of public funds to initiate the study.)</i>
Projected Job Creation: This project will study the farm-to-school needs, demands and capacities for regionally produced food products; therefore, the direct creation or retention of jobs will be limited or is unknown. <i>(Until the study is completed, it is unknown whether jobs would be affected.)</i>
<p>Related Linkages: The project will create linkages with local farmers, businesses and educational institutions and non-profits agencies. A number of planning efforts currently underway that are linked to this proposal include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Berkshire Sustainability Plan planning process • The Keep Farming Initiative
Timeframe: This planning study will not be undertaken until funding and regional partners are identified.
Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Project Name: Regional Economic Development District
Project Location: Regional
Project Summary: This project proposes to establish an Economic Development District, compliant with the Economic Development Administration's requirements, covering all of Berkshire County.
Funding Source(s): Economic Development Administration and Organizational match from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Projected Job Creation: This project will have an indirect effect on job creation or retention. An Economic Development District will enable a greater level of economic development planning than currently exists in the region, thereby providing the potential for substantial job growth or retention.
<p>Related Linkages: Through its implementation the establishment of an Economic Development District will link economic planning activities, organizations, communities and businesses throughout the county, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lee Community Development Corporation • Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Authority • Pittsfield Economic Development Authority • The Partnership for North Adams • Dalton Development and Industrial Commission • Northern Berkshire Industrial Park & Development Corporation • 1 Berkshires, Berkshire Chamber, Berkshire Visitors Bureau and Berkshire Creative • Businesses • Municipalities
Timeframe: The first step towards the development of a district is the completion of this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy report. CEDS approval is projected for June 2011. Once the CEDS is complete and approved, the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission will take the necessary steps to explore the creation of an Economic Development District, according to a contract the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) has with the Economic Development Administration.
Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Project Name: Housatonic Railroad Station Planning Feasibility Study
Project Location: Town of Great Barrington
Project Summary: This study would examine and identify potential locations for the development of a railroad station to accommodate the proposed Pittsfield to Connecticut passenger rail project. To evaluate each possible site the study would assess issues and impacts arising from access, parking, and future commercial services and development needs that would support passenger rail service.
Funding Source(s): Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Commonwealth and Federal Transportation Planning Funds, other Commonwealth, Federal and local funding programs
Projected Job Creation: This project will study the possibility of developing a railroad station to accommodate the proposed Pittsfield to Connecticut Passenger Rail project. <i>(It is difficult to identify the exact number of jobs to be created or retained for the development of a railroad station until specifics about the passenger rail service are known, although there is a strong potential for jobs to be created or retained.)</i>
Related Linkages: This project is directly linked with the proposed Pittsfield to Connecticut Passenger Rail project and other downtown Great Barrington capital improvements. Depending on specific station locations to be identified in the study, there is strong potential for linkages to high priority physical development projects identified in the CEDS.
Timeframe: The Housatonic Railroad has commissioned an economic feasibility study to assess the economic impacts of passenger rail service. Following the completion of this study, communities, like Great Barrington, will have a better understanding of the facility needs for a passenger rail station. The Town will also need to identify a funding source to undergo the study.
Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Project Name: Downtown Parking Strategy
Project Location: Town of Great Barrington
Project Summary: This project looks to commission a Parking Strategy for downtown Great Barrington. Components of this study will include the development of conceptual plans, cost estimates, and strategies for increasing the parking supply to meet the needs of downtown businesses, while maximizing parking efficiency. The Town has already identified two key sites of interest adjacent to the Town Hall as possibilities to increase the parking supply.
Funding Source(s): The funding sources for this study are unknown. <i>(It is anticipated that this project will require the use of public funds to initiate the study.)</i>
Projected Job Creation: This project will study the demands and capacities of parking in downtown Great Barrington; therefore, the creation or retention of jobs will be limited or is unknown. <i>(The affects and impacts on job creation and retention are unknown. If the better utilization of properties for parking creates developable space there is the potential for jobs to be created or retained; however, specifics about the type, number and specific location of jobs are unknown at this time.)</i>
<p>Related Linkages: The demand and capacity of parking is a vital component of business growth and economic development; thus this study will link all the businesses in downtown Great Barrington as well as the proposed development and redevelopment sites including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iredale Mineral Cosmetics expansion • River School Redevelopment project • New England Log Homes Redevelopment project • The expand the downtown corridor linking Main Street and the Housatonic River Walk (a result of the River School Redevelopment and New England Log Homes Redevelopment projects) • St. James Church Redevelopment project
Timeframe: This study is a concept and without funding. The commissioning of this study is unknown.
Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Project Name: Berkshire Creative Initiative

Project Location: Regional

Project Summary: This Berkshire Creative Initiative proposal is a grouping of multiple initiatives that will enhance and grow the creative economy of Berkshire County. The proposals in this grouping included:

- **Berkshire Product Initiative:** The Berkshire Product Initiative looks to expand sales capacity of creative economy businesses, headquartered in the Berkshires, to design, manufacture and distribute original products. This will be achieved through the development of a unified Berkshire brand and outreach to a broader market.
- **Seed Fund Network:** The Seed Fund Network will provide start-up funds for new businesses or established businesses looking to expand into new markets. This program is proposed to have resources, contributed from various sources to fund \$20,000-\$150,000 projects. This will take a large amount of cultivation of businesses and products and require an education component. Potentially, this could provide start-up funds for more than just creative businesses and could be expanded to help fund any small business or start-up business around the county.
- **Creative Lives Here Initiative:** The Creative Lives Here Initiative will support the development of the “Creativity Lives Here” marketing package, which includes: (1) help other regions to identify, recognize and strengthen their creative economy; (2) promotion of the creative industry within Berkshire County; (3) the development of a brand unique to the Berkshires that highlights its creative and innovative economy; and (4) efforts to attract new creative businesses to the region.
- **Berkshire Creative Challenge:** The Berkshire Creative Challenge is a mechanism to connect Berkshire County manufacturers and businesses with local designers, engineers and creative workers to stimulate innovative research and development for existing and/or new product lines.
- **Berkshire Festival:** The Berkshire Festival is a two-week, open-access, county-wide celebration of cultural and lifestyle, uniting an anticipated 100 arts organizations, businesses and nonprofits through innovative partnerships and collaboration to highlight the wealth of Berkshire County attractions while infusing the region with a new wave of audiences and patrons.

Funding Source(s): The sources of funding to implement these elements of the Berkshire Creative Initiative are unknown. *(It is anticipated that these initiatives may require the use of public and private funds as well as donations to be implemented.)*

Projected Job Creation: The exact numbers of jobs to be created or retained are unknown. *(These initiatives will support the artist industry throughout Berkshire County; however, specifics about the type, number and specific location of jobs are unknown at this time.)*

Related Linkages: Through the implementation of these projects elements discussed in the Creative Economy Report and the Berkshire Blueprint documents will be executed and the budding creative economy will be strengthened. These projects are also link other programs and efforts underway in the region such as:

- The Berkshire Hills Internship Program
- Massachusetts Cultural Council Education Initiative
- The Berkshire Angel Fund Network

Timeframe: The different components of the broader Berkshire Creative Initiative are in various stages of development or implementation.

Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Projects that Enhance the Region: Education and Workforce Development Category

Project Name: Berkshire Hills Internship Program
Project Location: Regional
Project Summary: The Berkshire Hills Internship Program (B-HIP) is administered by the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA). This program is a unique and important hands-on training program for the youth of Berkshire County that could be expanded. The program is an intensive arts management internship program that combines hands-on work experience with classes taught by arts administration faculty, “TalkBacks” with the area's leading arts professionals, and the chance to fully participate in cultural events throughout Berkshire County. Through the B-HIP, students are able to experience educational and career advancement opportunities in one segment of the region’s economic clusters industries: Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Service.
Funding Source(s): Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts – Cultural Resource Center
Projected Job Creation: The exact numbers of jobs to be created or retained are unknown. <i>(This project is primarily focused on providing students with educational and career experience opportunities; therefore, the exact number of jobs which might be created is unknown. However, it will better prepare students to be employed in one of the region’s key clusters.)</i>
Related Linkages: With over sixty cultural venues in Berkshire County, B-HIP partners organizations and events including Tanglewood, Jacob's Pillow, the Clark Art Institute, Barrington Stage Company, Ferrin Gallery, and Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art. The B-HIP creates educational and economic opportunities for residents throughout Berkshire County. There are also many private artists and businesses that B-HIP is linked with.
Timeframe: B-HIP is already an active program. Expansion of the program can be implemented immediately with any additional resources obtained.
Most Recent Update: April, 2011

Project Name: Berkshire Creative Initiative
Project Location: Regional
<p>Project Summary: This Berkshire Creative Initiative project proposal is a grouping of two initiatives that will enhance and grow the creative economy of Berkshire County. The project proposals in this grouping include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative Industry Workforce Pathways: The Creative Industry Workforce Pathways is a collaborative effort between Berkshire Creative, the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board and the partners of the Berkshire Compact to develop a profile of the jobs and occupations within the county’s creative economy and strategize training and education programs to fill industries needs. • Creative Education Initiative: The Creative Education Initiative will organize regional education partners, members of the Berkshire Compact and a leadership team from the creative economy to develop a study to analyze the creative offerings within the k-12 schools throughout the county. The group will then identify ways to improve and expand these offerings.
<p>Funding Source(s): The sources of funding to implement these elements of the Berkshire Creative Initiative are unknown. <i>(It is anticipated that these initiatives may require the use of public and private funds to be implemented.)</i></p>
<p>Projected Job Creation: The exact numbers of jobs to be created or retained are unknown. <i>(These initiatives will support the artist industry throughout Berkshire County; however, specifics about the type, number and specific location of jobs are unknown at this time.)</i></p>
<p>Related Linkages: Through the implementation of these projects elements discussed in the Creative Economy Report and the Berkshire Blueprint documents will be executed and the budding creative economy will be strengthened. These projects are also link other programs and efforts underway in the region such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Berkshire Hills Internship Program • Massachusetts Cultural Council Education Initiative • The programs administered through the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board
<p>Timeframe: The different components of the broader Berkshire Creative Initiative are in various stages of development or implementation.</p>
<p>Most Recent Update: April, 2011</p>

A list of other project proposals that were submitted is summarized in Appendix E. Some project proposals were identified as needing further refinement. As part of the annual Status Reports process, in the coming years, all proposals will be re-evaluated according to updated conditions, information and progress. The CEDS Strategy Committee expressed interest in working with project proponents to refine and clarify their proposals to be more competitive in future project prioritizations.

Chapter 5: Implementation of the Berkshire CEDS

The success of the 2011 Berkshire CEDS is rooted in the implementation of the Vision Statement, Goals and Objectives and Project Priorities that were established by the CEDS Strategy Committee during multiple meetings from January through May 2011. Based on the components that comprise *The Action Plan for Economic Prosperity*, the CEDS Strategy Committee formulated a list of actions intended to implement of this CEDS planning process. Through their implementation, these measures will provide the communities, economic development entities and organizations and citizens in the region a roadmap for the diversification, stabilization and transformation of the region's economy. Their implementation will also create a vehicle through which the region can better respond to priority issues and barriers to economic development and proactively address the region's evolving economy.

The activities presented on the following pages, are listed by goal together with implementation information. Project sponsors or Partners are listed as the likely participants in the activity. Being listed as a Project Sponsor or Partner does not necessarily indicate that entity has formally adopted that activity. Likely activity or project sponsors are identified with two asterisks (**) after the organization's title. Listing in the Funding Sources column, for the most part, indicates prospective rather than secured funds and indicates likely funding sources.

GOAL 1: TO IMPLEMENT UNIFIED REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES.

Activity Name	Description	Activity Sponsor (**) and Partners	Status	Funding Sources	Next Steps	Target Completion
Coordinate Economic Development	Develop a unified coalition of regional economic development focused organizations to facilitate economic planning in Berkshire County.	BRPC, Chambers, Berkshire Creative, Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, Berkshire Visitors Bureau, Communities, Partnership for North Adams, Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation, Pittsfield Economic Development Authority, Southern Berkshire Community Development Corporation, Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce and Others	Underway	Economic Development Administration <i>(potential)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify participating organizations - Establish coalition - Pursue funding for operations - Hold quarterly meetings - Explore Economic Development District designation 	December 2011
Coordinated Economic Development Activities	The Regional Marketing Program will coordinate marketing efforts for and of Berkshire County to consumers within and outside the county.	BRPC, Chambers, Berkshire Creative, Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, Berkshire Visitors Bureau, Communities, Partnership for North Adams, Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation, Pittsfield Economic Development Authority, Southern Berkshire Community Development Corporation, Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce and Others	Active	Organization Funding Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop and enhance a Berkshires Brand - Coordinate Unified Marketing Campaign 	Ongoing
	The Regional Retention/Attraction Program will organize the recruitment and retention of businesses at the regional scale for Berkshire County.		Active	Organization Funding Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with regional partners to oversee this program - Meet with regional businesses to determine future needs - Research and actively recruit new companies 	Ongoing
CEDS Status Reports and 5-year Update	Continue the discussion of economic planning within the region through the completion of Status Reports annually and a 5-year update.	BRPC** and Others	Concept	Economic Development Administration <i>(potential)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apply for EDA Planning Grant - Maintain CEDS Strategy Committee - Review CEDS report - Work with project proponents 	Ongoing

GOAL 2: TO ADVANCE THE REGION'S ECONOMIC PROGRESS THROUGH THE USE OF CURRENT AND PERTINENT DATA.

Activity Name	Description	Activity Sponsor (**) and Partners	Status	Funding Sources	Next Steps	Target Completion
Berkshire Benchmarks	Berkshire Benchmarks is a regional initiative to improve the quality, access, volume and analysis of regional data through an examination of regional indicators and a data clearinghouse.	BRPC** , Berkshire Community Action Council, Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, Berkshire United Way and Others	Active	Organization Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand Data Mining and Data Sets - Evaluate Industry Cluster Data - Connect and collaborate with Mass Benchmarks efforts - Utilize Data for CEDS Annual Status Report 	Ongoing
Annual Workforce Blueprint	Examine the critical and emerging industries through the region and identify the necessary skill sets for those sectors.	Berkshire County Regional Employment Board ** and Others	Active	Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete bi-annual report - Distribute results to regional partners - Build an understanding of the quality of life needs of workers 	Bi-annual <i>(Ongoing)</i>
Census Data	Fully utilize the 2010 Census and subsequent ACS estimates data.	BRPC**	Active	Organization Funded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyze data - Utilize data for Annual Status reports 	Ongoing
GIS Mapping	Use the thematic mapping of information to broaden the understanding of regional economic issues.	BRPC**	Concept	Organization Funded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhance regional mapping of census data 	December 2011

GOAL 3: TO INCREASE THE ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS OF THE REGION IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY.

Activity Name	Description	Activity Sponsor (***) and Partners	Status	Funding Sources	Next Steps	Target Completion
Business Development Assistance	Develop a portfolio of tools for business development and start-up needs.	Lee Community Development Corporation, MassDevelopment, Massachusetts Office of Business Development, Massachusetts Small Business Development Center Network, Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation, Southern Berkshire Community Development Corporation, Western Massachusetts Enterprise Fund, Inc. and Others	Active	Organization Funding Support	- Expand awareness and service capacity of assistance programs - Develop virtual clearinghouse for support programs and organizations	2011
Site and Building Locator	The locator is a web-based program that makes information about potential development locations accessible on the internet.	Berkshire Chamber of Commerce**, Communities, Economic Development Organizations and Others	Active	Organization Funding Support	- Expand visibility of Locator - Expand Locator database	2012
Angel Fund Network	The Angel Fund Network is a mechanism to connect investors or fund managers with emerging or expanding business prospects.	TBD	Concept	Organization Funding and Private Investment	- Identify organizational partners - Identify a sponsor - Secure funding and resources to implement	TBD

Activity Name	Description	Activity Sponsor (**) and Partners	Status	Funding Sources	Next Steps	Target Completion
Facilitate Access to Loan Programs	Through existing loan programs or other funding sources (i.e. EDA Loan Fund program) ensure that small businesses are able to access loans.	Banks, MassDevelopment, Pittsfield Economic Development Authority, Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation, Western Massachusetts Enterprise Fund, Inc. and Others	Concept	Commonwealth Federal (Economic Development Administration) and Others	- Apply for EDA Loan Fund grant.	2013
Industry Cluster Advancement	Encourage economic vitality of emerging industry clusters, the creative economy and innovative businesses in the region	Berkshire Creative, BRPC, Communities, Economic Development Organizations, State agencies and Others	Active	TBD	- Further identify cluster needs and opportunities - Implement specific identified programmatic activities	Ongoing

GOAL 4: TO STABILIZE AND STRENGTHEN THE REGION’S WORKFORCE.

Activity Name	Description	Activity Sponsor (***) and Partners	Status	Funding Sources	Next Steps	Target Completion
Worker Training Fund (WTF)	This activity promotes regional industries to apply for WTF grants to implement training programs.	Berkshire County Regional Employment Board** , Industries and Others	Active	Workforce Training Fund	- Expand awareness and marketing of WTF - Provide technical assistance to industries - Facilitate and encourage industry applications	Ongoing
Connecting Activities Internship Program	This program provides a mechanism to connect high school students with industry internships and training programs to successfully compete in post-secondary education programs.	Berkshire County Regional Employment Board** , Industries, Secondary Educators and Others	Active	Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education	- Develop a broader network of educators and industries for internships - Secure grant funds to expand program, specifically recruit private investors	Ongoing
	This program also connects post-secondary students with industry training programs to develop the necessary career-related skills in order to successfully compete in the workplace.	Berkshire County Regional Employment Board** , Berkshire Community Col., Bard College at Simon’s Rock, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Regional Educators and Others	Active	Industries and Educational Institutions		
Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM Pipeline Network)	The STEM Pipeline Network is a Berkshire Region and Commonwealth initiative to improve STEM educational programs, while strengthening connections between businesses and education to inspire and lead the next generation of educators.	Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts** , Berkshire Community College, Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, Bard College at Simon’s Rock, Public Schools, Williams College and Others	Active	Commonwealth	- Complete construction of the MCLA Center for Science and Innovation - Increase enrollment - Recruit qualified STEM teachers - Improve the STEM educational offerings available in schools	2013

Activity Name	Description	Activity Sponsor (***) and Partners	Status	Funding Sources	Next Steps	Target Completion
Industry Sector Initiative	This activity promotes the development of strategies to address critical workforce needs and shortages regionally and outwardly.	Berkshire County Regional Employment Board** , Berkshire Community College, Bard College at Simon's Rock, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Regional Educators and Others	Active	Commonwealth Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement Photovoltaic training program - Attract, train and retain healthcare employees - Implement CAN, LPN, RN training programs - Identify industry sector priorities - Research/apply for industry sector grants 	Ongoing
Berkshire Compact	Utilize the Berkshire Compact and the region's education partnerships to prepare and strengthen the next generation of workers.	Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts** , Berkshire Community College, Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, Bard College at Simon's Rock, Public Schools, Williams College, and Others	Active	Organization Funding Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise the aspirations of all Berkshire County residents to view 16 years of education, or greater, as the accepted educational norm - Improve access to education, training and lifelong learning - Make Berkshire County a competitive location for the new technology and knowledge-based economy - Develop a "social contract" with employers, employees and educational institutions to encourage and promote learning, earning and civic engagement 	Ongoing

GOAL 5: TO ADVANCE HIGH-QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENTS TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT, REDEVELOPMENT AND REVITALIZATION OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT.

Activity Name	Description	Activity Sponsor (***) and Partners	Status	Funding Sources	Next Steps	Target Completion
Regional Affordable Housing Initiative	Throughout Berkshire County there are multiple organizations working to provide affordable housing. This initiative is meant to promote and support all these efforts to ensure the availability of a broad-base of affordable housing options for all of Berkshire County residents, including farm labor.	Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority, Berkshire Housing Development Corporation, Public Housing Authorities, Southern Berkshire Community Development Corporation, Municipalities and Others	Active	Federal and State Affordable Housing Programs, Organization Funding Support and Private Donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen communication between employers to ensure the availability and quantity of housing needs are met - Write letters of support for various entities to shore-up funding gaps 	Ongoing
Land Use Reform	This regional initiative will promote the proactive updating of municipal bylaws to minimize permitting delays and adverse development impacts.	BRPC** , Communities** , Commonwealth, and Others	Active	District Local Technical Assistance, Community Allocated Funds and BRPC	- Proactively work with communities to revise municipal bylaws	Ongoing
Regional Sustainability Plan	The Regional Sustainability Plan is a collaborative and comprehensive regional planning effort to develop a roadmap for the county's future, focusing on making the region more sustainable.	BRPC** , Regional Consortium** and Communities	Underway	HUD	- Commence the development of the plan	February 2014

Activity Name	Description	Activity Sponsor (**) and Partners	Status	Funding Sources	Next Steps	Target Completion
Regional Energy Initiative	There are multiple efforts working to provide affordable energy. This initiative is meant to promote and support all these efforts to ensure the availability and generation of low cost and sustainable energy; while promoting energy conservation, effective consumer advocacy, competitive electricity supply, and alternative energy options.	BRPC** , Communities, Legislative Delegation, National Grid, Western Massachusetts Electricity and Others	Underway	Commonwealth (Department of Energy Resources and Clean Energy Center), Federal (Department of Energy) and Consumer Energy Conservation Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen communication between energy providers and customers to ensure the availability of low cost and environmentally sustainable energy - Work with communities to update zoning bylaws - Develop a toolbox for communities and developers considering the installation of alternative energy infrastructure - Develop a regional energy plan 	Ongoing
Regional Transportation Improvements	There is a need for transportation improvements for all modes, including highways, airports, rail and transit. These activities would encourage and support the construction of transportation improvements.	BRPC, Communities, Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Private Industry and Others	Underway	Federal and Commonwealth Transportation Funds and private Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leverage local and state support for transportation improvements - Secure funding and resources for implementation - Initiate predevelopment planning and design work - Pursue permitting - Construct 	Ongoing

Activity Name	Description	Activity Sponsor (**) and Partners	Status	Funding Sources	Next Steps	Target Completion
Regional Telecommunication Improvements	Advance the region's telecommunication capability by installing affordable, reliable and redundant high capacity "Middle-Mile" and "Last-Mile" broadband services.	WesternMA Connect Inc.** , WiredWest** , BRPC , Communities and Others	Underway	Federal (National Telecommunications & Information Administration; Rural Utilities Service) grants/loans, Commonwealth (Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) - Massbroadband 123 Initiative), Communities, and Private investments or loans	<u>Middle-Mile</u> - Complete design and permitting work for technologies - Begin installation of infrastructure <u>Last-Mile</u> - Complete Phase I - Begin development of "Pilot Projects" -Continue to secure funding	Ongoing
Regional Utility Infrastructure Improvements	Support orderly expansion and regular upgrading of utilities to insure service and capacity needs are met.	Communities** , BRPC and Others	Active	Local, Commonwealth and Federal Funds	- Secure funding t- Conduct analysis - Identify potential funding sources to assist construction of utility improvements	Ongoing
Targeted Community Site Development	This activity supports community development projects, such as industrial parks and re-development of underutilized sites and building, for commercial, industrial and mixed use.	Communities** , BRPC and Others	Active <i>(community specific)</i>	Local, Commonwealth, Federal Funds, Private Investment	(Project specific – typical steps include) - Secure funding and resources for implementation - Conduct predevelopment planning and design work - Secure permits - Construct	Ongoing

GOAL 6: TO FACILITATE THE REGION’S ASSESSMENT, REMEDIATION AND REDEVELOPMENT OF BUILDINGS AND SITES.

Activity Name	Description	Activity Sponsor (***) and Partners	Status	Funding Sources	Next Steps	Target Completion
Berkshire Brownfields Program	This is a regional program geared towards the investment of capital and resources to identify, assess and remediate sites containing contaminants from past development.	BRPC** , Communities, Southern Berkshire Community Development Corporation, Lee Community Development Corporation, MassDevelopment, Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation, Pittsfield Economic Development Authority and Others	Active	Federal, Commonwealth and Local Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand awareness and visibility of program - Facilitate the release of funds from the revolving loan fund to facilitate the utilization of underutilized sites and buildings - Continue to work with communities and property owners to identify, assess and remediate contaminated sites - Secure additional grant funds 	Ongoing
Regional Adaptive Reuse of Mills Initiative	Collaborate with communities throughout the region to evaluate, address and better utilize vacant and underutilized mills throughout the county.	BRPC** , Communities and Others	Concept	To Be Determined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Inventory mills throughout the county - Survey interest of communities - Secure funding and resources to implement Commence study of individual mills 	Ongoing

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Chapter 6: Performance Measures

To move the Berkshires economy forward and to facilitate the ongoing economic planning process, the Berkshire CEDS has been completely rewritten for 2011, including the performance measures. The CEDS is required to be re-written every five-years; however, status reports are produced annually. The status reports help to verify the implementation of the CEDS, assess its overall effectiveness and provide a basis for periodic updates where needed. The reports are a way to proactively address the region's changing economy to make the CEDS an evolving (or living) document.

As part of the status reports, developed by BRPC, the CEDS Strategy Committee will examine the implementation progress of the 2011 Berkshire CEDS report. Performance measures will be used to ascertain the effectiveness of *The Action Plan for Economic Prosperity* chapter, specifically the progress towards achieving the region's goals, objectives and priority projects. To support this examination, current characteristic data from federal, state and other sources will be utilized to assist the assessment where appropriate. The CEDS Strategy Committee, through this process, will also be able to identify supplemental steps that are needed to address both local and regional economic changes and challenges.

The performance measures to be used include:

1. **How many jobs have been created and retained after implementation of projects from the Berkshire Project Priority List? How many of those jobs have been high quality in terms of wage levels, working conditions, etc.**
2. **What number and types of investments have been undertaken in the region?**
3. **What is the number of business and non-profit organization startups, mergers and closures since the implementation of the CEDS? What economic sectors are those businesses in?**
4. **What collaborative or partnership efforts have been initiated? What are the statuses of those initiatives?**
5. **What changes to the characteristic data for the region have occurred? The characteristic data sets to be evaluated, but not limited to, include:**
 - Demographic
 - Economic
 - Environmental/Geographic
 - Governmental
 - Social
 - Transportation/Infrastructure
6. **How has the gathering of data and project information improved?**

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Chapter 7: State Cooperation, Consistency and Integration

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts does not have an EDA approved State CEDS. To ensure this CEDS process incorporates the Commonwealth's current economic development plans and priorities and complies with EDA requirements, BRPC staff contacted the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED). According to a phone interview with Eric Nakajima, Senior Policy Advisor at EOHED, in late 2010 the Commonwealth was in the process of initiating a state-wide economic planning initiative. The actual timeline and structure for this process has yet to be determined. He did, however, suggest that reference should be made to the Commonwealth's *Framework for Action: The State Regional Economic Development Strategy* (or Framework) plan. Major concepts within the Framework are expected to be carried forward.

The Framework was developed by the Commonwealth, specifically EOHED, in collaboration with the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute and the John Adams Innovation Institute of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative. The document was intended to facilitate a discussion of economic development with local, regional and civic stakeholders to focus efforts at the state and regional levels to ensure economic prosperity for the Commonwealth. The mission for this plan is:

“To develop a framework for state programs and investments in partnership with local and regional leaders that leads to sustained economic growth and shared prosperity throughout the Commonwealth.”

The CEDS Strategy Committee determined it important to recognize and compare the Framework in relation to the 2011 Berkshire CEDS process. To do so, the CEDS Strategy Committee compared *The Action Plan for Economic Prosperity*, specifically the goals, objectives and project priorities sections, to the Framework's three tasks and actions for implementation. The three tasks of the Framework are:

1. Identification of assets, initiatives and investments that lead to realistic near-term and long-term economic growth throughout the Commonwealth.
2. Communicate a straightforward framework for the Patrick Administration's economic development priorities.
3. Prioritize state investments and initiatives and promote meaningful collaboration with community, civic, business, municipal, and legislative leaders throughout the Commonwealth.

From this comparison, the CEDS Strategy Committee found that the 2011 Berkshire CEDS process incorporated the fundamental areas of focus for attention and investment outlined within the Framework to support regional economic prosperity: cluster development and innovation; workforce and family economic security; regional and statewide infrastructure; and vital communities. The foundational drivers to support the implementation of these areas of focus were generally consistent as well. A mechanism not mentioned within the Framework, but emphasized by the CEDS Strategy Committee, was the development of a comprehensive package of business development resources as an important mechanism to facilitate business growth and regional stability. Although the implementing actions within the two plans were different, primarily in scale, the underlying concentration of the Commonwealth's Framework aligned with the 2011 Berkshire CEDS process.

To ensure ongoing collaboration with the Commonwealth and their economic development initiatives and planning, the CEDS Strategy Committee it was suggested that a representative from EOHED participate in future CEDS planning activities.

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Chapter 8: Conclusion

The Berkshire region is facing challenges that it has faced for decades. Expectedly, the area has endured cyclical changes in its population and economic vitality, much like the rest of New England. It is important that the region work collaboratively to coordinate and make better use of the ideas, innovations and resources that are here so that further fragmentation and stigmas of the region are not perpetuated. Ultimately, it is the goal of the CEDS to make certain regional conversations are initiated and maintained so that the most significant economic development activities of the region move forward and to ensure benefits impact the greatest number of Berkshire residents possible.

The will and energy to foster collaboration and partnerships to develop economic prosperity is alive in the region. It is alive in the CEDS Strategy Committee, communities and the residents of the Berkshires. Given accessible pools of funding and more, proactive and sustained support efforts, the CEDS process can facilitate or be a catalyst for sustained, prosperous economic development in the Berkshires. This document and commitment of its partners is one “big” step in the right direction. As it has in the recent past, the Berkshires will economically thrive in the future to come.

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Appendices

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Appendix A: Commonly Used Acronyms and Abbreviations

Abbreviation

Chamber
 MassGIS
 MassDevelopment
 MassDOT
 MassPIKE

Actual Spelling

Berkshire Chamber of Commerce
 Massachusetts Office of Geographic Information
 Massachusetts Development
 Massachusetts Department of Transportation
 Massachusetts Turnpike

Acronyms

ACS
 BCC
 BCREB
 BCSR
 BMC
 BRPC
 BTCF
 CEDS
 DUR
 EDA
 MA
 MBI
 MCLA
 NAICS
 NELH
 NY
 RTP
 SBCC
 SBCDC
 MSBDC
 US
 WMECO
 WMEF

Actual Spelling

American Community Survey (*U.S. Census Bureau*)
 Berkshire Community College
 Berkshire County Regional Employment Board
 Bard College at Simon's Rock
 Berkshire Medical Complex
 Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
 Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation
 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
 Durable Goods Manufacturing
 Economic Development Administration
 Massachusetts
 Massachusetts Broadband Institute
 Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
 North American Industry Classification System
 New England Log Homes
 New York
 Regional Transportation Plan
 Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce
 Southern Berkshire Community Development Corporation
 Massachusetts Small Business Development Center (Berkshire County Regional Office)
 United State
 Western Massachusetts Electricity Company
 Western Massachusetts Enterprise Fund, Inc.

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Appendix B: Definition of Terms

Agriculture

Agriculture or farming shall include farming in all of its branches and the cultivation and tillage of the soil, dairying, the production, cultivation, growing and harvesting of any agricultural, aqua cultural, floricultural or horticultural commodities, the growing and harvesting of forest products upon forest land, the raising of livestock including horses, the keeping of horses as a commercial enterprise, the keeping and raising of poultry, swine, cattle and other domesticated animals used for food purposes, bees, fur-bearing animals, and any forestry or lumbering operations, performed by a farmer, who is hereby defined as one engaged in agriculture or farming as herein defined, or on a farm as an incident to or in conjunction with such farming operations, including preparations for market, delivery to storage or to market or to carriers for transportation to market.

Chapter 43D (Expedited Local Permitting)

The Chapter 43D process is an expedited local permitting process administered by Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED). The purpose of this process is to streamline state and local permitting processes in order that a permit for commercial or industrial development (on a site identified as a Priority Development Site) can be issued within 180 days.

Cluster Industry

A Cluster Industry (also known as a *business cluster* or *competitive cluster*) is an economic planning approach that promotes economic development and growth. It does so by increasing the ability of these businesses or industries to collaborate, build common suppliers and markets, and create common workforce skills, thereby improving overall competitiveness. If implemented regionally, this concept presents the potential to disperse the economic generating activities of various communities while still maintaining proximity of those industries so the diffusion of ideas, concepts and products can flow freely. The implementation and success of clustering economically intertwined industries strengthens a region, while contributing to a robust state and national economy.

New Economy

The New Economy as defined in *The 2010 State New Economy Index: Benchmarking Economic Transformation in the States* (developed by the *Information Technology and Innovation Foundation* and the *Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation*) uses twenty-six indicators, divided into five categories that best capture what is new about the New Economy: 1) Knowledge jobs; 2) Globalization; 3) Economic dynamism; 4) Transformation to a digital economy; and 5) Technological innovation capacity.

North American Industry Classification System

The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) is the standard used by Federal statistical agencies in classifying business establishments for the purpose of collecting, analyzing, and publishing statistical data related to the U.S. business economy. NAICS was developed under the auspices of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and adopted in 1997 to replace the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system. It was developed jointly by the U.S. Economic Classification Policy Committee (ECPC), Statistics Canada, and Mexico's Institution National de Statistical y Geography, to allow for a high level of comparability in business statistics among the North American countries.

North American Industry Classification System Definitions

Sector 11--Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting: The Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting sector comprises establishments primarily engaged in growing crops, raising animals, harvesting timber, and harvesting fish and other animals from a farm, ranch, or their natural habitats.

Sector 21--Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction: The Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction sector comprises establishments that extract naturally occurring mineral solids, such as coal and ores; liquid minerals, such as crude petroleum; and gases, such as natural gas. The term mining is used in the broad sense to include quarrying, well operations, beneficiating (e.g., crushing, screening, washing, and flotation), and other preparation customarily performed at the mine site, or as a part of mining activity.

Sector 22—Utilities: The Utilities sector comprises establishments engaged in the provision of the following utility services: electric power, natural gas, steam supply, water supply, and sewage removal. Within this sector, the specific activities associated with the utility services provided vary by utility: electric power includes generation, transmission, and distribution; natural gas includes distribution; steam supply includes provision and/or distribution; water supply includes treatment and distribution; and sewage removal includes collection, treatment, and disposal of waste through sewer systems and sewage treatment facilities.

Sector 23—Construction: The construction sector comprises establishments primarily engaged in the construction of buildings or engineering projects (e.g., highways and utility systems). Establishments primarily engaged in the preparation of sites for new construction and establishments primarily engaged in subdividing land for sale as building sites also are included in this sector.

Sector 31-33—Manufacturing: The Manufacturing sector comprises establishments engaged in the mechanical, physical, or chemical transformation of materials, substances, or components into new products. The assembling of component parts of manufactured products is considered manufacturing, except in cases where the activity is appropriately classified in Sector 23, Construction.

Sector 42--Wholesale Trade: The Wholesale Trade sector comprises establishments engaged in wholesaling merchandise, generally without transformation, and rendering services incidental to the sale of merchandise. The merchandise described in this sector includes the outputs of agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and certain information industries, such as publishing.

Sector 44-45--Retail Trade: The Retail Trade sector comprises establishments engaged in retailing merchandise, generally without transformation, and rendering services incidental to the sale of merchandise.

Sector 48-49--Transportation and Warehousing: The Transportation and Warehousing sector includes industries providing transportation of passengers and cargo, warehousing and storage for goods, scenic and sightseeing transportation, and support activities related to modes of transportation. Establishments in these industries use transportation equipment or transportation related facilities as a productive asset. The type of equipment depends on the mode of transportation. The modes of transportation are air, rail, water, road, and pipeline.

Sector 51—Information: The Information sector comprises establishments engaged in the following processes: (a) producing and distributing information and cultural products, (b) providing the means to transmit or distribute these products as well as data or communications, and (c) processing data.

Sector 52--Finance and Insurance: The Finance and Insurance sector comprises establishments primarily engaged in financial transactions (transactions involving the creation, liquidation, or change in ownership of financial assets) and/or in facilitating financial transactions. Three principal types of activities are identified:

1. Raising funds by taking deposits and/or issuing securities and, in the process, incurring liabilities. Establishments engaged in this activity use raised funds to acquire financial assets by making loans and/or purchasing securities. Putting themselves at risk, they channel funds from lenders to borrowers and transform or repackage the funds with respect to maturity, scale, and risk. This activity is known as financial intermediation.
2. Pooling of risk by underwriting insurance and annuities. Establishments engaged in this activity collect fees, insurance premiums, or annuity considerations; build up reserves; invest those reserves; and make contractual payments. Fees are based on the expected incidence of the insured risk and the expected return on investment.
3. Providing specialized services facilitating or supporting financial intermediation, insurance, and employee benefit programs.

In addition, monetary authorities charged with monetary control are included in this sector.

Sector 53--Real Estate and Rental and Leasing: The Real Estate and Rental and Leasing sector comprises establishments primarily engaged in renting, leasing, or otherwise allowing the use of tangible or intangible assets, and establishments providing related services. The major portion of this sector comprises establishments that rent, lease, or otherwise allow the use of their own assets by others. The assets may be tangible, as is the case of real estate and equipment, or intangible, as is the case with patents and trademarks.

Sector 54--Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services: The Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services sector comprises establishments that specialize in performing professional, scientific, and technical activities for others. These activities require a high degree of expertise and training. The establishments in this sector specialize according to expertise and provide these services to clients in a variety of industries and, in some cases, to households. Activities performed include: legal advice and representation; accounting, bookkeeping, and payroll services; architectural, engineering, and specialized design services; computer services; consulting services; research services; advertising services; photographic services; translation and interpretation services; veterinary services; and other professional, scientific, and technical services.

Sector 56--Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services: The Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services sector comprises establishments performing routine support activities for the day-to-day operations of other organizations. These essential activities are often undertaken in-house by establishments in many sectors of the economy. The establishments in this sector specialize in one or more of these support activities and provide these services to clients in a variety of industries and, in some cases, to households. Activities performed include: office administration, hiring and placing of personnel, document preparation and similar clerical services, solicitation, collection, security and surveillance services, cleaning, and waste disposal services.

Sector 61--Educational Services: The Educational Services sector comprises establishments that provide instruction and training in a wide variety of subjects. This instruction and training is provided by specialized establishments, such as schools, colleges, universities, and training centers. These establishments may be privately owned and operated for profit or not for profit, or they may be publicly owned and operated. They may also offer food and/or accommodation services to their students.

Sector 62--Health Care and Social Assistance: The Health Care and Social Assistance sector comprises establishments providing health care and social assistance for individuals. The sector includes both health care and social assistance because it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the boundaries of these two activities. The industries in this sector are arranged on a continuum starting with those establishments providing medical care exclusively, continuing with those

providing health care and social assistance, and finally finishing with those providing only social assistance. The services provided by establishments in this sector are delivered by trained professionals. All industries in the sector share this commonality of process, namely, labor inputs of health practitioners or social workers with the requisite expertise. Many of the industries in the sector are defined based on the educational degree held by the practitioners included in the industry.

Sector 71--Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation: The Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation sector includes a wide range of establishments that operate facilities or provide services to meet varied cultural, entertainment, and recreational interests of their patrons. This sector comprises (1) establishments that are involved in producing, promoting, or participating in live performances, events, or exhibits intended for public viewing; (2) establishments that preserve and exhibit objects and sites of historical, cultural, or educational interest; and (3) establishments that operate facilities or provide services that enable patrons to participate in recreational activities or pursue amusement, hobby, and leisure-time interests.

Sector 72--Accommodation and Food Services: The Accommodation and Food Services sector comprises establishments providing customers with lodging and/or preparing meals, snacks, and beverages for immediate consumption. The sector includes both accommodation and food services establishments because the two activities are often combined at the same establishment.

Sector 81--Other Services (except Public Administration): The Other Services (except Public Administration) sector comprises establishments engaged in providing services not specifically provided for elsewhere in the classification system. Establishments in this sector are primarily engaged in activities, such as equipment and machinery repairing, promoting or administering religious activities, grant making, advocacy, and providing dry-cleaning and laundry services, personal care services, death care services, pet care services, photofinishing services, temporary parking services, and dating services. Private households that engage in employing workers on or about the premises in activities primarily concerned with the operation of the household are included in this sector.

Sector 92--Public Administration: The Public Administration sector consists of establishments of federal, state, and local government agencies that administer, oversee, and manage public programs and have executive, legislative, or judicial authority over other institutions within a given area. These agencies also set policy, create laws, adjudicate civil and criminal legal cases, provide for public safety and for national defense. In general, government establishments in the Public Administration sector oversee governmental programs and activities that are not performed by private establishments. Establishments in this sector typically are engaged in the organization and financing of the production of public goods and services, most of which are provided for free or at prices that are not economically significant.

Government establishments also engage in a wide range of productive activities covering not only public goods and services but also individual goods and services similar to those produced in sectors typically identified with private-sector establishments. In general, ownership is not a criterion for classification in NAICS. Therefore, government establishments engaged in the production of private-sector-like goods and services should be classified in the same industry as private-sector establishments engaged in similar activities.

Appendix C: Leadership and Staffing

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee

Name	Organization
Brenda Burdick	General Dynamics Advanced Information Systems
Christine Ludwiszewski	Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce
Deanna Ruffer	City of Pittsfield
Eleanore Velez	Berkshire Community College/Public
Heather Boulger	Berkshire County Regional Employment Board
Helena Fruscio	Berkshire Creative
Michael Hoffman	TD Bank
Kevin O'Donnell	Town of Great Barrington
Keith Girouard	Berkshire Regional Office Massachusetts Small Business Development Center
Kristine Hazzard	Berkshire United Way
Lauri Klefos	Berkshire Visitors Bureau
Laury Epstein	Berkshire Grown
Michael Nuvalle	City of North Adams
Michael Supranowicz	Berkshire Chamber of Commerce
Robert Wilson	IBEW Local 7 (Electrical Workers)
Roger Bolton	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Timothy Geller	Community Development Corporation of South Berkshire
Mark Berman	Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
Stuart Chase	Berkshire Strategic Alliance, Inc.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee Alternates

Name	Organization
Ann Dobrowolski	City of Pittsfield
Andy Frank	General Dynamics Advanced Information Systems
Marya LaRoche	Berkshire County Regional Employment Board

None Voting Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee Member

Name	Organization
Alison Johnson Krol	Representative of Senator Benjamin B. Downing

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Staff

Staff	Position
Nathaniel Karns	Executive Director
Thomas Matuszko	Assistant Director
Daniel Sexton	Planner
Mark Maloy	GIS/Information Coordinator

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Appendix D: Public Comment

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30-Day Public Notice in The Berkshire Eagle (4/16/2011 through 5/16/2011)

<p align="center">Public Notices</p>	<p align="center">Public Notices</p>	<p align="center">Public Notices</p>
<p align="center">COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Department Berkshire Division</p> <p align="right">Docket No. BE10E0016</p>	<p>If you desire to object thereto, you or your attorney should file a written appearance in said Court at 44 Bank Row, Pittsfield, MA 01201, before ten o'clock in the forenoon on the 25th day of April, 2011, the return day of this citation.</p>	<p align="center">(SEAL) THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS LAND COURT DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL COURT</p> <p>To: Case No.11 Misc 445094 Jae Ann Witzgall</p>
<p>TO: Paul Kwasniowski and all other interested parties;</p>	<p>WITNESS, Richard A. Simons, First Justice of said Court, this 15th day of March, 2011.</p> <p align="right">Francis B. Marinaro Register</p>	<p>and all persons entitled to the benefit of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act:</p>
<p>An amended petition has been presented to the said Court By John V. Kwasniowski of Las Vegas, Nevada representing that he holds an undivided one-half (1/2) interest part or share in certain real estate situate in Pittsfield, Berkshire County, Massachusetts, and briefly described as follows:</p>	<p>04/02/11, 04/09/11, 04/16/11</p> <p align="center">NOTICE OF FILING OF BANK MERGER APPLICATION</p>	<p>RBS Citizens National Association, successor bank by merger with Citizens Bank of Massachusetts</p> <p>claiming to be the holder of Mortgage covering real property in Dalton, numbered 151 Tower Road</p>
<p>Parcel of land on the southerly side of Williamsburg Terrace, so-called, in Pittsfield, being Lot No. 27 on a Map entitled "Revised Plan of Building Lots laid out by Gilbert L. West, et al, Pittsfield, Mass., October 1, 1945. A.J. Kohlhofer, Engineer." which map was approved by the Planning Board of Pittsfield, December 5, 1945, in Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds, Drawer 159. Together with a right of way for all the usual purposes of a street, over and upon Greenwich Street, so-called, Williamsburg Terrace, so-called, Deerfield, so-called, as shown on said plan.</p>	<p>Notice is hereby given that Berkshire Bank, a Massachusetts savings bank located at 24 North Street, Pittsfield, Massachusetts 01201, has filed an Interagency Bank Merger Act Application (the "Application") with the Boston Area Office of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation ("FDIC") to merge with Legacy Banks, a Massachusetts savings bank located at 99 North Street, Pittsfield, Massachusetts 01201, with Berkshire Bank as the surviving institution.</p>	<p>given by Jae Ann Witzgall to Citizens Bank of Massachusetts, dated November 12, 2002, recorded with the Berkshire County (Middle District) Registry of Deeds Book 2383, Page 17 and now held by Plaintiff by merger,</p>
<p>SUBJECT to the following restrictions: No structure shall be erected thereon except a single dwelling house costing not less than Four Thousand and Five Hundred (\$4,500.00) Dollars, and a private garage for not over two cars; no portion of any structure placed or erected thereon shall be nearer than twenty-five (25) feet from the southerly line of Williamsburg Terrace.</p>	<p>It is contemplated that all of the offices of the above-named institutions will continue to be operated following the proposed merger, subject to certain proposed divestitures.</p>	<p>has filed with said court a complaint for authority to foreclose said mortgage in the manner following: by entry and possession and exercise of power of sale.</p>
<p>SUBJECT to and with the benefit of the protective covenants of Elizabeth W. Wellington, et als, dated May 19, 1942, and recorded in said Registry of Deeds, Book 500 Page 196 & c., so far as applicable. SUBJECT, also, if and so far as applicable, to the certain easement given by Gilbert L. West et als, to the Pittsfield Electric Company dated September 18, 1941, and recorded in Berkshire County Middle District Registry of Deeds, in Book 491, Page 561.</p>	<p>Any person wishing to comment on the Application may file his or her comments in writing with the Area Director of the FDIC at its Boston Area Office, 15 Braintree Hill Office Park, Braintree, Massachusetts 02184-8701, not later than May 4, 2011, which is 30 days following the first publication of this notice. The comment period may be extended or reopened by the Area Director for good cause. The non-confidential portions of the Application are on file at the Area Office and are available for public inspection during regular business hours. Photocopies of the nonconfidential portion of the Application file will be made available upon request.</p>	<p>If you are entitled to the benefits of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act and you object to such foreclosure you or your attorney should file a written appearance and answer in said court at Boston on or before MAY 23 2011</p> <p>or you may be forever barred from claiming that such foreclosure is invalid under said act.</p>
<p>setting forth that he desires that all of said land may be sold at private sale for not less than One Hundred Thirty Thousand and No/100 (\$130,000.00) Dollars and praying that a partition may be made of all the land according to law, and to that effect a commissioner be appointed to make such partition and be ordered to make sale and conveyance of all, or any part of said land which the Court finds cannot be advantageously divided either at private sale or public auction, and be ordered to distribute the net proceeds thereof in such manner as to make the partition just and equal.</p>	<p>04/04/11, 04/16/11, 04/29/11</p>	<p>Witness, KARYN F. SCHEIER, Chief Justice of said Court on APR 07 2011</p>
<p>04/16/11</p>	<p align="center">Public Notice</p> <p>The Draft 2011 Berkshire County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy prepared by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission is available for public comment. Go to the BRPC website at: http://www.berkshireplanning.org/ to access the report or for information about submitting comments. Comments must be submitted no later than noon Monday May 16, 2011. Contact Daniel J. Sexton, (413) 442-1521 ex. 28, dsexton@berkshireplanning.org for information.</p> <p>04/16/11</p>	<p>A TRUE COPY Attest: DEBORAH J. PATTERSON RECORDER</p> <p>Jeremy Moskowitz, Esquire Barsh and Cohen, P.C. 70 Wells Avenue Newton, MA 02459 617-332-4700</p> <p>04/16/11</p>
		<p align="center">Town of Cheshire Rent Control Board Notice of Public Hearing</p> <p>The Cheshire Board of Selectmen, acting as the Rent Control Board, will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, April 26, 2011 at 8:00 pm in the Cheshire Town Hall to act on Notices of Eviction filed by property owner, Pine Valley MHC LLC. Project location: Pine Valley Mobil Home Park, Cheshire, MA.</p> <p>Daniel J. Delorey, Clerk</p> <p>04/16/11</p>

Steven R. Cunningham, Ph.D.
Director of Research and Education

Phone: (413) 528-1216 x3118
Fax: (413) 528-0103
E-mail: Steven.Cunningham@aier.org

May 9, 2011

Thomas Matuszko
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
1 Fenn Street, Ste 201
Pittsfield, MA 01201



Re: 2011 Berkshire County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Project

I am writing in support of the WiredWest project, as part of the Regional Telecommunications Network. We believe this project is critical for Berkshire County and Western Massachusetts as a whole.

The high-performance internet access offered by a fiber-to-the-home network, as proposed by WiredWest, will be critical to enabling future commerce in our region, and is in fact necessary for the success of future economic development initiatives. It will positively impact for-profit and not-for-profit businesses of all sizes, including AIER. These services are essential for any firm to operate effectively in the modern digital world. It will attract new entrepreneurs to the region, stimulate innovation and provide good quality employment opportunities. And it will provide the necessary means to diversify our economy from its dependence on the service sector.

WiredWest's proposed solution will also add to local tax bases and bolster property values recently reduced by a stagnant real estate market.

Without the type of last-mile solution WiredWest is forwarding, our region will continue to receive patchy service from last-generation technologies, which will not provide the necessary bandwidth or reliability to fully participate in the modern digital economy. The Massachusetts Broadband Institute's fiber-optic middle mile has been funded and is being implemented – but it's critical to support the creation of a robust network from end-to-end by creating a future-proof fiber-optic last mile as well, through the WiredWest initiative. We suggest that the Berkshire CEDS survey continues to rank the WiredWest project, as part of the Regional Telecommunications Network, as the highest priority of "Projects Representing the Greatest Needs Regionally."

I was involved in a similar project a few years ago in western North Carolina, and have personally seen the difference this technology can bring to a region. The time has come.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steven R. Cunningham". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Steven R. Cunningham
Director of Research and Education

May 2, 2011

Nathaniel Karns, Executive Director
Daniel J. Sexton, Planner
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
1 Fenn Street, Suite 2011

In response to the public comment period regarding the 2011 CEDS project, please see the following suggestions:

- Has the BCRPC or CEDS Committee discussed or determined through any studies that sites and structures are “contaminated?” (page 59) Or should it read that these sites and structures have been labeled contaminated? Do not believe the example of the river is needed nor does it add value to the project.
- 1BerkshireStrategic Alliance, Inc. is moving forward (page 64). With the recent announcement of the hiring of a CEO, 1Berkshire Strategic Alliance, Inc. is well prepared to guide the region’s economic development efforts and has been recognized by the Mass Office of Business Development as such, I would suggest the word potentially be removed.
- A limited access highway (page 76) would truly be the most positive economic growth mechanism for many regions in the county, including the William Stanley Business Park with its rail access. The report may benefit by not including language that indicates this project is not feasible, unless there is objective published data that suggests otherwise.
- Cost to end users (page 77) should be taken into consideration when facilitating and/or supporting renewable energy generation, would like to see “cost effective” built into the line item.
- Is it possible that naming locations for projects that merit county benefits could have adverse effects by such naming? Will a sports complex project in a community other than the named one in the report be considered for funding on an equal basis as one named? If not, the committee should reconsider the naming on any such projects in the report.



Michael Supranowicz
President & CEO

From: vining
To: dsexton@berkshireplanning.org
Subject: comments on CEDS
Date: Monday, May 16, 2011 11:37:21 AM

Please accept these brief comments on the CEDS Plan. I firmly believe that preservation and even expansion of our agricultural resources and opportunities should be a key element of any economic development plan. Support of agriculture should be a strong component of any plan for the future of the Berkshires, as it is an essential element of our scenic resources and tourism attractions, a vital food source that should be preserved for the future, employment for our populace, and a backbone of open space preservation and maintenance of our environmental integrity. I would like to see more emphasis on this in the Economic Development Plan.

I also inquire whether a request for comments on this Plan has gone to members of the BRPC through the town planning boards. I apologize for our oversight if it did, but as a member of the Egremont Planning Board, I do not recall seeing this request and would appreciate more time for our board to have the opportunity to review the plan and comment on it.

Thank you.

Eileen Vining

Pine Island Farm

*1474 Hewins Street
Sheffield, Ma 01257*

Phone (413) 229-8354

*Fax (413) 229-2903
Louisaragi@gmail.com*

5/16/2011

Dear Berkshire Regional Planning Commission,

I am writing to you today to let you know how important it is that the agricultural enhancement and economic development support elements of Comprehensive Economic Strategy and should be a priority supporting the agricultural economic development for Sheffield and neighboring communities.

My name is Holly Aragi, and my husband is Louis Aragi Jr. of Pine Island Farm in Sheffield Massachusetts.

Operating on a full time basis, Pine Island Farm is set up as a partnership owned and operated by Louis T. Aragi Sr. and Louis T. Aragi Jr. Father and Son, who both possess a wealth of experience and knowledge with regard to farming. Lou, Sr. has over forty years of dairy experience. Lou, Jr. grew up on the farm and has, literally, been involved in the dairy operation all of his life. (He would be my husband)

We employ seven full- time employees and five part-time employees that are on the farm throughout the year. Five seasonal workers are on the farm June thru October to assist with crop management and harvest.

There are approximately a thousand head of Holstein dairy cattle that make up the herd at Pine Island. At the present time the farm generates approximately 12,000,000 pounds of milk annually. Four hundred and seventy cows are being milked and sixty cows are dry. Another five hundred or so fall into the category of young stock and replacement stock-day old calves to springers.

We own 479 tillable acres devoted to growing corn solely for the farms herd. We also harvest 521 acres for hay.

Alternative Energy and Energy Infrastructure Improvements are important to the farm. Currently, the final stages are being finished on a anaerobic methane digester, which when becomes functional it will significantly affect the surrounding environment. The primary focus in establishing the digester is to both “mine the farm waste” for conversion into beneficial by-products and effectively use those digested by-products. (Heat Source,

electricity, fertilizer, compost-bedding materials.) Therefore, better control and management of the farm's waste products will not only impact the environment, the farm site and the neighboring landscape but, with full implementation of this digester, it will impact the farm expenditures and future revenue for the farm.

Running a successful dairy operation in Massachusetts is a challenge. Up to the challenge, through thoughtful, creative planning and by making solid business decisions, we have developed a dairy operation that relies heavily on the farms natural resources (landmass and field crops).

The cropland provides vast scenic views for travelers to take full advantage of as they pass through Southern Berkshire County. They can take advantage of the many stages that the crops go through to get to be a final product for our cattle-feed.

The farm also believes that the "Berkshire Farm -to-School Feasibility Study is extremely important to continue. Educating our youth on the importance of "where food comes from" without such knowledge future generations will have grave consequences. The program has been a real outreach for our school system in which three of our children attend. We are always looking for support for agricultural resources and keeping this in the vision is very important. The communities must always continue to be educated on an ever- changing life style we know as farming.

I just want to thank you for the program and the goals that have been set in all the areas of the provision, but they all must remain a vital part of our region and communities and continue to move forward.

Sheffield is a very small community of farmers, and not many of us remain in our area. Without the support from our local community and outreach programs like yours, the likelihood of a business like ours to try to sustain for future generations are very slim.

Please take the time to support local agriculture in the community, and we appreciate the great support you give to our livelihood.

Farmers are a dieing breed. Without all types of agriculture from big farms to small they all play an extreme importance in everyone's life. We all need to agree that without farms none of us eat !!!

Sincerely,

*Holly Aragi
Pine Island Farm, Sheffield, Massachusetts*

From: [Tom Matuszko](#)
To: ["Patricia Soldati"](#)
Cc: ["Dan Sexton"](#)
Subject: RE: WiredWest is Critical
Date: Monday, May 09, 2011 12:48:22 PM

Patricia,

Thank you for your comment.

Tom Matuszko
413-442-1521 ex 34

From: Patricia Soldati [mailto:patricia@purposefulwork.com]
Sent: Saturday, May 07, 2011 9:26 AM
To: tmatuszko@berkshireplanning.org
Subject: WiredWest is Critical

Dear Mr. Matuszko,

I am writing to underscore the need for a WiredWest fiber-to-the-home solution for 40+ families who live in an unserved/underserved area of West Stockbridge, MA. The intersection of West Center / West Alford Roads and environs currently has no cell service, no DSL or other high speed Internet, and, for most, no cable television service. (Those who do have cable TV are serviced by Charter Communications who provides no Internet or HDTV access.)

While all of these services are critical, we are especially concerned with the absence of high-speed Internet. Among us are small business owners who struggle every day with slow access, inability to download/upload files, and poor productivity. We are parents who need high-speed services for educational purposes for our kids. And, we are second homeowners who would spend more time in the Berkshires given an Internet situation that appropriately supported business operations. And finally, we are all concerned about the resale value of our properties; while anecdotal, the realtors we've spoken to over the past year tell us that buyers are not much interested in properties without high-speed Internet connections.

We are intimately familiar with the great efforts of WiredWest. Please be sure to keep this technology solution HIGH on your radar. It is critical to our town and individual businesses.

Sincerely,

Patricia Soldati
124 West Center Rd.
West Stockbridge MA
(413) 232-7950

From: [Paula Melville](#)
To: TMatuszko@berkshireplanning.org; DSexton@berkshireplanning.org
Subject: Comment on Draft 2011 Berkshire County CEDS
Date: Saturday, May 14, 2011 11:17:43 AM

From Adams resident Paula Melville, 10 Summer Street:

In the spirit of full disclosure and clarity and stipulating what needs to be stipulated, I would consider it an affront to the townspeople of Adams -- and therefore must object strenuously -- if this document were used to offer a project or a tenuous connection between projects to effect the satisfaction of the purpose of the Chapter 676 (Greylock Glen) legislation of 1985, which was "to create a regional economic facility area."

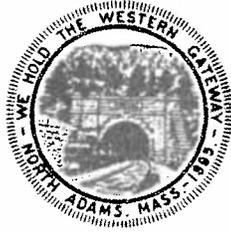
Please stay out of our fight to see right done by the Town of Adams by the Commonwealth.

Consequently, perhaps the heading on page 80 should relate then to the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail project.

More brownsfield funding is desirable.

The promotion of north Berkshire County as a destination, in general, could be helped through advertising the circuit of routes 8 - 2 - 7 and for Adams, in particular, as a place to walk (our Polish Mile, the Rail Trail, and the acres of the Glen/Mount Greylock area.)

Thank you.



CITY OF NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS

Office of the Mayor
Richard J. Alcombright

May 12, 2011

Nathaniel W. Karns, Executive Director
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
1 Fenn Street – Suite 201
Pittsfield, MA 01201

RE: “Comprehensive Economic Development Study” (CEDS)

Dear Mr. Karns,

I offer this letter of support for the new 2011 CEDS document that your agency has been working on so diligently on for the last several months. I cannot stress enough how important it is having this study, especially given the fact that the last one was from 2001. It is very important that Berkshire County continues to recognize and formulate its current economic challenges in a way that helps to solidify our respective communities, while at the same time fostering a mechanism to access needed funds from the Federal Economic Development Administration.

I am an avid supporter of quality economic development throughout the county, yet one in which allows for smart and sustainable growth, as we try to build, promote and live within a new creative economy. As you are aware, Berkshire County has not always enjoyed the economic success relative to the balance of our Commonwealth, thus one of the driving reasons in the compilation of a new CEDS. Any type of quality project that can be built within this county must be given financial opportunity as we move forward in stressed economic times.

I am very pleased with the final product that the CEDS has produced, and am very proud that the City of North Adams through the efforts of Mike Nuvalle was an integral part of the process. I would also like to stress how important it is hereafter, that the study’s annual updating be conducted so that we can stay abreast of the every changing economic challenges that face us, and I very much want North Adams to be part of the continued efforts.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Alcombright
Mayor

RJA/mn

10 Main Street • North Adams, Massachusetts 01247



The City of Pittsfield, Massachusetts
Department of Community Development

Deanna L. Ruffer
Director

James M. Ruberto
Mayor

May 12, 2011

Mr. Thomas Matuszko
Assistant Director
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
1 Fenn Street, Suite 201
Pittsfield, Massachusetts 01201

Dear Mr. Matuszko:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Berkshire Regional Planning Commissioner's draft Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The City continues to be concerned about the lack of emphasis on the most significant regional economic development need in Berkshire County; that is the over arching need for a limited access connector from the Massachusetts Turnpike through Pittsfield and north to North Adams.

We again ask BRPC and the Advisory Committee to reconsider the regional significance of the reconstruction of the McKay Street Parking Garage. This facility provides parking for more than a 1,000 employees, customers and visitors. This 15+ year old structure is in dire need of \$7-10 million dollars of upgrades. The design work for this project has been completed and is ready to go out to bid. The lack of upgrades to the parking garage are impeding efforts to attract a new owner or tenant(s) to the former KayBee Toys Building with over 75,000 square feet of Class A commercial space; a building that has previously and can again house more than 300 new employees. This parking facility also serves the Beacon Cinema, which brings more than 190,000 people a year to our downtown, as well as many restaurants and retail businesses located downtown. This project is not only located in a designated Growth District and high priority development area for the Commonwealth, it is also one of the few projects which is actually located in an Economic Development Administration eligible area.

Finally, while we appreciate the diligent work of the CEDS Advisory Committee, I – like the majority of the members of the Advisory Committee – have repeatedly questioned the process. As the Advisory Committee has said repeatedly, the process was problematic. As a result, the resulting document has limited value and should not be used for any purpose other than meeting the pre-requisite requirement for accessing Economic Development Administration grant programs.

Sincerely,

Deanna L. Ruffer
Director

City of Pittsfield – City Hall – 70 Allen Street – Room 205 – Pittsfield, MA 01201
(413) 499-9368 or (413) 442-5661 fax



May 9, 2011

Tom Matuszko
Assistant Director
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
1 Fenn Street, Suite 201
Pittsfield, MA 01201-6629

Re: Support for the 2011 Berkshire Comprehensive Economic Development Survey

Dear Tom,

Lee Bank supports the WiredWest initiative. We must expand broadband service for our homes, governments, businesses and schools that are currently un-served or under-served throughout communities in Western Massachusetts.

Broadband is essential for economic development in Western Massachusetts. We need it to attract businesses to locate here. We need it to compete and succeed in our modern economy. Broadband has become a necessity for our communities.

The WiredWest initiative will stimulate employment in Hospitality, IT, Manufacturing, Healthcare and Education. It's implementation will create jobs in construction. WiredWest will enable the latest techniques in the classroom for teachers and students. It will streamline our local government operations. It will allow businesses to compete and locate in Western Massachusetts. And it will positively impact real estate values in the region.

Lee Bank supports the efforts of WiredWest to build this advanced fiber-optic network in the Western Massachusetts Region.

Very truly yours,

Richard G. Aldrich
Senior Vice President

From: [Abbruzzese, Kelsey](#)
To: dsexton@berkshireplanning.org
Subject: berkshire comprehensive economic development strategy - comments
Date: Monday, May 16, 2011 9:11:34 AM

Hi Daniel,

Great work with this year's Berkshire CEDS - just a couple of comments. If you could include the Massachusetts Office of Business Development in the Business Development list and MassDevelopment in the Brownfields Assistance list, that would be terrific. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks for giving us the opportunity to comment.

Kelsey

Kelsey Abbruzzese
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MINUTES
PITTSFIELD ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION CORPORATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 2011
8:00 A.M., CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBER

1) Roll Call

Members Present:

Jay Anderson
Marshall Raser
William Mulholland
Laurie Green
Deanna Ruffer

Members Absent:

Barry Clairmont
Robert Cohen
Brian Johnson
Mark McKenna
Matthew Scarafoni
Richard Vinette

Also present:

Ann Dobrowolski, DCD Community Development Specialist
Deborah Courtney, Executive Secretary
Thomas Matuszko, Assistant Director, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

2) Minutes: March 11, 2011

William Mulholland moved to accept the minutes of March 11, 2011 and it was seconded by Marshall Raser and unanimously approved.

3) 2011 Berkshire Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Program: Presentation by Thomas Matuszko and Daniel Sexton, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

Ann Dobrowolski introduced Thomas Matuszko, Assistant Director of Regional Planning Commission. Mr. Matuszko said that he has been working for the last 8 to 10 months on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan (CEDS), a document to include economic development activities in the region. He stated that this document will enable municipalities to tap into grant funds from the Economic Development Administration (EDA). Jay Anderson asked if municipalities received funding in the past? Mr. Matuszko replied, yes but there

has not been any approved CEDS plan approved for a number of years and that the Town of Lee received emergency planning funds when the mills closed down. We need to build upon the assets that we have is one accomplishment he stressed. How to retain businesses we have already here and how to help them grow. Key element is: is the workforce capable of responding to changing times and meeting the needs of industry? Recognize that we have infrastructure and community improvements to obtain development, as well as a good transportation network. Continue to work on transportation. They will address in the plan buildings and sites that could be redeveloped and reused before development of greenfields. Broader picture. One requirement from EDA is that they have to approve the CEDS to allow us to take advantage of funds. We have to have a priority list of projects. There were a total of 80 different project ideas that were received.

The thirty day public comment period will start and then the committee will reconvene and determine what to do with comments and keep advancing the approval process. BRPC will approve it and send to EDA for their approval as well. Their outline is based on federal regulations. Jay Anderson asked if there is an existing economic development district. Thomas Matuszko replied no and in order to obtain that it requires communities and EDA's approval. We are trying to explore if there is an interest in doing that. This will open it up, if we had a district, to a broader area.

William Mulholland suggested including the Compact for Higher Education goal that all citizens in Berkshire County achieve 16 years of education or training. That was a collective goal to get that workforce to be developed here and stay here. The younger kids are having bachelor degree which is important for their future and it will add a lot of clout as part of our work goals. Thomas Matuszko said he will bring that forward as a comment.

Jay Anderson stated that he will look to see if PERC is identified appropriately in the implementation plan. Jay Anderson thanked Mr. Matuszko for coming and he left the room at 8:40 a.m.

D. Ruffer commented that after serving on the advisory committee there was a flawed project solicitation process that resulted in important projects being left out, i.e. a north-south limited access highway and upgrades to the McKay Street parking garage, which is vital to the downtown and shovel-ready. The process also allowed projects that lack credence and are still in the concept stage to make the priority project listing. The City of Pittsfield has not yet determined how it will comment on the draft plan.

4) Promotion Committee: Progress Report on Communication and Marketing Project

Ann Dobrowolski reported that there have been meetings with Winstanley Partners to focus on the website design and there is a meeting on April 25 at Winstanley Partners to go over the website design.

5) Closed Session:

On a roll call vote a motion was made by William Mulholland to enter into Closed Session at 8:45 a.m. and it was unanimously approved for the purpose of discussing the portfolio report. For the record the application of DMM Enterprises, Inc. D/B/A/ Balance Rock Investment Group for Department of Business Development Technical Assistance Grant in the amount of \$5372.00 was approved.

The board came back into regular session at 8:55 a.m.

6) Other Business

Ann Dobrowolski informed the board about an invitation from MassPIRG on a transit session next Thursday, April 21st at the Lichtenstein Center at 5:30 pm. They have also invited the legislative delegation and BRTA.

She said that Massachusetts Community Business Partnership will be hosting a roundtable discussion on Tuesday, April 26th from 3:00-5:00 pm in Greenfield. They are considering forming a group that will help support CDC's for activities and services that provide direct benefits to small business owners.

Dun & Bradstreet approached us to join to get services to see who is pulling our credit report and enter more financial information. Jay Anderson concluded that we don't need it.

Deanna Ruffer added that this Monday, the FY12 HUD (our FY13) budget was published. She said that she expects a 10 percent reduction in funding so far. She is trying to keep additional funding to PERC for Technical Assistance and loans. She said that she has learned that the Federal FY11 HUD (our FY12) budget has resulted in approximately a 16.2 percent reduction in funding. That will make it tough for her staff and she is attempting to keep all staff in place but it is tough and she is doing a balancing act as to whether it is a dramatic drop to reduced staff level as well as program levels. Her position to the Mayor was that she cannot afford to lose staff and that the grant program should not be penalized. She will meet with the Mayor next week to adjust for the 16.2 percent drop. There is a Public Hearing scheduled at 7:30 on Wednesday the 27th of April. She informed the board that she is expecting more cuts in the FY12 (our FY13) budget.

Marshall Raser made a motion to adjourn at 9:10 a.m. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

From: [Sheffield Land Trust](#)
To: [Dan Sexton](#)
Subject: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Comments
Date: Monday, May 16, 2011 11:56:52 AM

Hi Dan,

I am writing to comment on the Draft Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and to thank you and the committee for recognizing the importance of including our natural resources and the agricultural sector and resources in the CEDS. Agriculture and our landscape and natural environment are key economic foundations of our region– and have been since the first settlers here.. I am going to focus on agriculture in my comments, as it is most specific in the CEDS and much of what is said about agriculture can be applied to our landscape and natural resources in general.

I understand that logistics and the process for developing the Berkshire Blueprint made it difficult to include agriculture as a “cluster” when the Blueprint was done, so it is even more important that the CEDS process was such that the value of agriculture and enhancing agricultural economic development to the agricultural industry, individual producers and those industries which agriculture support (such as tourism based on the landscape, local foods, quality of life, etc) and the region as a whole has been highlighted.

The comments are in order of when the topic arises in the CEDS.

1. My first comment is the suggestion to add “agriculture” or “agricultural” to “The Vision for the Berkshires” statement. I recall someone saying that agriculture could be seen as falling under “natural resources” and some people do see it that way, but there are also many people who might not think of that and for whom it would be valuable to specifically mention agriculture so it doesn’t fall through the cracks.

I imagine that the “Vision” is going to be one of the most frequently cited elements of the CEDS – for grants, publicity, etc – and having agriculture listed would open doors for additional sources of funding and could attract more resources to agricultural economic development itself and to the rest of the CEDS in general, especially with the Governor’s emphasis on supporting working landscapes and farms and the growing emphasis on food security and food systems in the foundation world. It also will help those in the more traditional “economic development:” arena who are more likely to be in the category of those who would not instinctively think about “agriculture” when reading “natural resources” interpret the intention of the CEDS more accurately. Agriculture being broken out in Master Plans and Open Space and Recreation Plans also speaks to specifically mentioning agriculture in the CEDS “Vision” statement. It could be integrated smoothly as follows, or however else it makes sense to the committee.

The Vision for the Berkshires: To create a diverse and robust economy that creates sustainable prosperity for all its residents. While capitalizing on the region’s heritage, intellectual vigor, cultural assets and **AGRICULTURAL AND** natural resources we will encourage innovation, collaboration and entrepreneurial spirit.

2. It would be valuable to incorporate an agricultural reference into the Alternative Energy Plan, with projects like the Howden Farm solar panels (which Rep. John Olver helped secure funding for) and the Pine Island Farm

methane digester (which MA Technology Collaborative, USDA Rural Development and others sources are helping to make possible) being good examples of projects already existing and in process that generate jobs while being constructed and, in the case of the digester, ongoing jobs once built. Those benefits being on top of providing alternative energy itself.

3. Redevelopment of the Gt. Barrington Fairgrounds should remain a top priority in the final CEDS, with all the richness and related value-added businesses, land conservation and community development elements listed and those that could be added, such as incorporating the need for more and better slaughter and processing capacity (noted and also in the Berkshire Farm-to-School Feasibility Study), community kitchen and marketing, etc. People drive from hours away to go to Agricultural Fairs in surrounding states and in other Massachusetts Communities, we have an opportunity to direct some of that income and those jobs here not only for season fairs but in a year-round local marketplace.

4. The Berkshire Farm-to-School Feasibility Study is also a key priority, with all the links mentioned in the existing CEDS. And it would also be valuable to expand this to the other regional institutions like the hospitals to take advantage of the tremendous buying capacity for an item like local hamburger that could be produced. Connection to efforts by the local Agricultural Commissions (led by the Alford, Egremont and Sheffield AgComs) related to local slaughter and processing capacity and creating a feasibility study/business plan would be valuable. The Berkshires has an unusual opportunity within our food system with our strong base for supply and built in demand. It would also make sense to tie in to the fledgling Agricultural Education and FFA (Future Farmers of America) programs in the Southern Berkshire Regional School District and Berkshire Hills Regional School Districts to coordinate and leverage maximum resources and ensure that these programs are sustainable and supported regardless of school budgets so that the resources available through them (including linking students, businesses, farms, nonprofits, etc) are constant.

5. I would also urge that the final CEDS incorporate housing for farmers and farm labor, as this is a challenge particularly in South County where housing prices can be prohibitively high and where in some towns population is growing rather than shrinking.

In closing I would urge the committee to maintain as priorities in the final CEDS agricultural economic development in general in addition the specific agriculturally-related projects so far identified, as well as related value-added, land conservation, community development and other correlated and off-shoot projects. With a national and regional focus on food and agriculture, this is an ideal time to make the investment here and draw some of those resources to our communities to help us enhance our economic development.

I look forward to reading and helping to implement the final plan. Please don't hesitate to be in touch with any questions, and thank you again.

Sincerely,

Kathy Orlando

Executive Director, Land Protection

Sheffield Land Trust

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Sheffield, MA 01257

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TOWN OF DALTON

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April 6, 2011

Mr. Thomas Matuszko, AICP
Assistant Director
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

RE: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, CEDS, - Project Prioritization

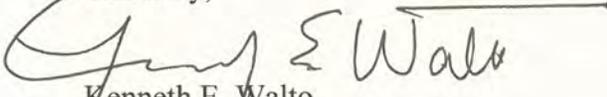
Dear Mr. Matuszko:

Thank you for taking the time to attend our last meeting in order to thoroughly discuss the CEDS process and prioritization methodology. We appreciate having one of our Commission members on the Strategy Committee as well.

We are writing to ask that the priority for Ashuelot Park be upgraded to the highest level on the following basis. Ashuelot Park is a regional development located in both Dalton and Pittsfield. Crane & Co. has made a commitment to consolidate its stationery division there, utilizing 150,000 square feet in the underutilized manufacturing plant known as AP1. This operation could have been easily located, or outsourced outside of Berkshire County. Therefore, the retention of 300 well paying jobs is significant both regionally and locally. Moreover, the company is also relocating non-woven product manufacturing to the other underutilized building known as AP2. Non-wovens are innovative high technology polymer products and therefore significant for the county's economy. There are on-going alternative energy projects tied to the park and Crane. This may have a significant impact on the company's need to rely on imported oil and may also result in district electric generation for the park and the company which will create new jobs as well. Lastly vacant land on the site allows for future related operations creating an important economic synergy.

Taken as a whole, development of Ashuelot Park provides a significant regional economic engine worthy of the highest evaluation for regional importance.

Sincerely,


Kenneth E. Walto
Chairman
Development & Industrial Commission



Kevin O' Donnell
Town Manager

E-mail: kodonnell@townofgb.org
www.townofgb.org



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Great Barrington, MA 01230

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TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON MASSACHUSETTS

OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

May 11, 2011

Thomas Matuszko
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
1 Fenn Street, Ste 201
Pittsfield, MA 01201



Re: 2011 Berkshire County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Project – Public Comment

This letter serves as Town of Great Barrington's support for the WiredWest project, as part of a Regional Telecommunications Network. We believe this project is critical not only for the Town of Great Barrington, but for Berkshire County and Western Massachusetts as a whole.

The high-performance internet access offered by a fiber-to-the-home network, as proposed by WiredWest, will be critical to enabling future commerce in our region, and will be fundamental for the success of future economic development initiatives. It will positively impact businesses of all sizes, including our home-based businesses, equipping them to survive and thrive in the modern digital world. It will attract new entrepreneurs to the region, stimulate innovation and provide good quality employment opportunities. And it will help to continue diversifying our economy from its dependence on the service sector.

WiredWest's proposed solution will also help to stabilize the local tax base and bolster property values recently reduced by a stagnant real estate market.

Without the type of last-mile solution WiredWest is forwarding, our region will continue to receive patchy service from last-generation technologies, which will not provide the necessary bandwidth or reliability to fully participate in the modern digital economy. The Massachusetts Broadband Institute's fiber-optic middle mile has been funded and is being implemented – but it's critical to support the creation of a robust network from end-to-end by creating a future-proof fiber-optic last mile as well, through the WiredWest initiative. We suggest that the Berkshire CEDS survey continues to rank the WiredWest project, as part of the Regional Telecommunications Network, as the highest priority of "Projects Representing the Greatest Needs Regionally."

Sincerely,

Sean Stanton, Chairman
Board of Selectmen Town of Great Barrington



TOWN OF MONTEREY

435 Main Rd. P.O. Box 308
Monterey, MA 01245



May 2, 2011

Thomas Matuszko
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
1 Fenn Street, Ste 201
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Re: 2011 Berkshire County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Project – Public Comment

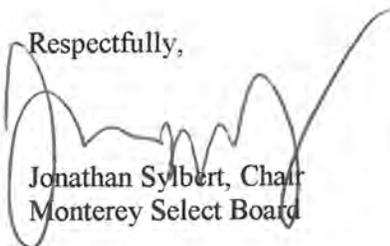
This letter serves as the Town of Monterey's support for the WiredWest project, as part of the Regional Telecommunications Network. We believe this project is critical not only for our town, but for Berkshire County and Western Massachusetts as a whole.

The high-performance internet access offered by a fiber-to-the-home network, as proposed by WiredWest, will be critical to enabling future commerce in our region, and is in fact necessary for the success of future economic development initiatives. It will positively impact businesses of all sizes, including our home-based businesses in Monterey, equipping them to survive and thrive in the modern digital world. It will attract new entrepreneurs to the region, stimulate innovation and provide good quality employment opportunities. And it will provide the necessary means to diversify our economy from its dependence on the service sector.

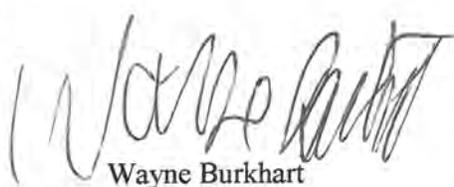
WiredWest's proposed solution will also add to our local tax base and bolster property values recently reduced by a stagnant real estate market.

Without the type of last-mile solution WiredWest is forwarding, our region will continue to receive patchy service from last-generation technologies, which will not provide the necessary bandwidth or reliability to fully participate in the modern digital economy. The Massachusetts Broadband Institute's fiber-optic middle mile has been funded and is being implemented – but it's critical to support the creation of a robust network from end-to-end by creating a future-proof fiber-optic last mile as well, through the WiredWest initiative. We suggest that the Berkshire CEDS survey continues to rank the WiredWest project, as part of the Regional Telecommunications Network, as the highest priority of "Projects Representing the Greatest Needs Regionally."

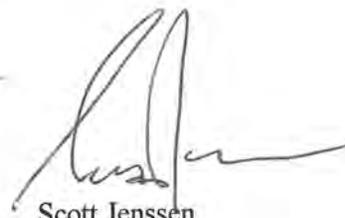
Respectfully,



Jonathan Sylbert, Chair
Monterey Select Board



Wayne Burkhart



Scott Jensen

SB/mn

Phone: 413.528.1443 x114 Fax: 413.528.9452
townmont@verizon.net

From: [Tom Matuszko](#)
To: ["Joseph Roy"](#)
Cc: ["Dan Sexton"](#)
Subject: RE: West Stockbridge Village Association supports Wired West
Date: Monday, May 09, 2011 12:46:57 PM

Joseph,

Thank you for your comment.

Tom Matuszko
413-442-1521 ex 34

From: Joseph Roy [mailto:joeroyjr@me.com]
Sent: Monday, May 09, 2011 9:24 AM
To: Thomas Matuszko
Subject: West Stockbridge Village Association supports Wired West

May 9, 2011

Thomas Matuszko
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
1 Fenn Street, Ste 201
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Re: 2011 Berkshire County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Project – Public Comment

This letter serves as The West Stockbridge Village Association's support for the WiredWest project. Our membership is made up of many West Stockbridge businesses throughout our town. We understand that The WiredWest project is part of a Regional Telecommunications Network. We believe this project is essential for any business in West Stockbridge, Berkshire County and Western Massachusetts as a whole.

As stated in The 2011 Berkshire Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy [draft,] "The lack of high speed internet service has been an impediment to economic development across Western Massachusetts for well over a decade..." The high-performance internet access offered by a fiber-to-the-home network, as proposed by WiredWest, will be critical to enabling future commerce in our region.

We hope The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission will support all efforts to rank the WiredWest project, as part of the Regional Telecommunications Network, as a high priority.

Best Regards,

Joseph Roy, Jr
Clerk

West Stockbridge Village Association
PO Box 231
West Stockbridge, MA 01266

<http://www.weststockbridgetown.com/merchants.htm>

Joe Roy, Jr
joeroyjr@mac.com

From: [Michael Abbate](#)
To: "dsexton@berkshireplanning.org"
Subject: 2011 Berkshire CEDS
Date: Thursday, April 21, 2011 2:19:46 PM

Dan:

I read through the Berkshire draft CEDS and it is a treasure trove of information about Berkshire County we will use in our programs. Great work and thanks for including WMEF in the document. We look forward to expanding our efforts in Berkshire County.

Michael Abbate
Director of Finance & Administration
Western MA Enterprise Fund, Inc.
4 Open Square Way, Suite 407
Holyoke, MA 01040
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www.wmeff.org

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Appendix E: Other Considered Project Proposals

Project List
<i>Physical and Technology Infrastructure Projects</i>
Route 102 infrastructure
Public Transit
Lenox Sewer Project
Harriman & West Airport
Washington Mountain Road
Phase 3 - Lenox Village Improvements
Lee Bike Path
Bridge Projects
<i>Program Initiative Projects</i>
Berkshire Tourism Website Restructuring
Berkshire Welcome Center Feasibility Study
Berkshire County Foodshed Analysis and Feasibility Study
Berkshire Tourism Research
Regionalization of the City of Pittsfield Wastewater Treatment Facility
Downtown West Side Plan
Master Plan for Washington
Pre-Treatment Policy Development
Columbia Mill Dam
Economic Gardening
October Mountain - Woods Pond Gateway
<i>Physical Development Projects</i>
Mohawk Theater Restoration
Lee Mills Project
St. James Church
Sawmill Bank Project
Armory Bldg. Re-use
Route 2 Corridor
Redevelopment of the former City Sewer Treatment Plant
Data or Network Operations Center in the City of Pittsfield

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Appendix F: Project Priority List Evaluation Criteria

2011 CEDS Evaluation-Scoring Worksheet		
<u>Regional Criteria</u>		
<i>Economic Significance for the Region</i>		
(Mark a 0, 1, 3 or 5 next to each Criteria a proposal meets. In the instance of the <u>Local Community Impacts</u> and <u>Regional Impacts</u> criteria, mark "1" next to each Criterion a proposal meets.)		
Criteria		
1 of 7	<i>Employment Impact: Potential for Job Creation or Retention</i>	
	<u>Criteria:</u> Potential of proposal for <i>job creation or retention.</i> (select one score for each proposal)	Score
	No discernible, estimated or actual job creation/retention.	0
	The proposal has the potential to create or retain an unknown amount of jobs.	1
	Estimated or has the potential to create/retain up to 49 jobs.	3
	Estimated or has the potential to create/retain 50+ jobs.	5
2 of 7	<i>Employment Impact: Job Quality</i>	
	<u>Criteria:</u> Primarily occupations requiring skilled or educated workers, and offering commensurate wages. (select one score for each proposal)	Score
	The skill level is unknown for the proposal.	0
	Primarily requiring unskilled or entry level workers.	1
	Primarily requiring some skills or education, or moderate level of job training.	3
	Primarily requiring advanced education, or highly skilled workers.	5
3 of 7	<i>Employment Impact: Training</i>	
	<u>Criteria:</u> Facilitates the improvement of job skills or offers workforce training activities. (select one score for each proposal)	Score
	No job training opportunities or career ladder unclear/undefined.	0
	Minimal or indirect job or skill training.	1
	Job training opportunities or career ladder defined.	3
	Provides job or skill training, or educational opportunities as major activities.	5

4 of 7	<i>Business/Entrepreneurial Impact: Assistance or Support Programs</i>	
	<u>Criteria:</u> Does the proposal advance, involve or support business/entrepreneurial assistance or support activities? <i>(select one score for each proposal)</i>	Score
	No discernible assistance or support programs identified.	0
	Minimal or indirect reference to business/entrepreneurial assistance and/or support programs.	1
	Proposal provides structure for direct/indirect assistance and/or support for business/entrepreneurial development programs.	3
	Provides business/entrepreneurial assistance and/or support as a major component of the proposal.	5
5 of 7	<i>Redevelopment/Reuse Impact: Community or Regional Benefits</i>	
	<u>Criteria:</u> Proposal promotes redevelopment/reuse (of existing vacant or underutilized property, and/or Downtown location, and/or housing production, and/or affordable/employee housing component). <i>(select one score for each proposal)</i>	Score
	Proposal would offer no redevelopment/reuse benefit.	0
	Proposal may involve some redevelopment/reuse component.	1
	Proposal would involve several redevelopment/reuse features.	3
	Proposal meets all redevelopment/reuse components noted above.	5
6 of 7	<i>Local Community Impact</i>	
	<u>Criteria:</u> Project receives points if expected benefits are viewed as having a Local Community Impact by expanding capacity for or promoting economic development activity at the local community level, through: <i>(mark a "1" in the row of each local community impact that applies)</i>	Score
	Expanding workforce skills or education	1
	Expanding access to or availability of capital or management expertise	1
	Expanding supply of land or buildings available through major redevelopment or Brownfields reclamation	1
	Building capacity of local organizations to manage projects	1
	Expanding knowledge of local assets, economic performance, and/or economic advantages or opportunities	1
	Eliminating local community barriers to competitiveness	1
	Increasing opportunity or support for entrepreneurial activities	1
	Promoting collaboration on economic development projects	1
	Expanding or supporting cluster economic development activities	1
	Project is of a locally significant size: 100+ employment	1

	Other local benefits not identified above.	1
7 of 7	<i>Regional Impacts</i>	
	<u>Criteria:</u> Project receives points if expected benefits are viewed as having a <i>regional impact</i> by <i>expanding capacity for or promoting economic development activity in the region, through:</i> <i>(mark a "1" in the row of each regional impact that applies)</i>	Score
	Expanding workforce skills or education	1
	Expanding access to or availability of capital or management expertise	1
	Expanding supply of land or buildings available through major redevelopment or Brownfields reclamation	1
	Building capacity of regional organizations to manage projects	1
	Expanding knowledge of regional assets, economic performance, and/or economic advantages or opportunities	1
	Eliminating regional barriers to competitiveness	1
	Increasing opportunity or support for entrepreneurial activities	1
	Promoting collaboration on economic development projects	1
	Expanding or supporting cluster economic development activities	1
	Project is of a regionally significant size: 100+ employment	1
	Other regional benefits not identified above.	1

2011 CEDS Goals and Objectives
(Mark a "1" next to each Objective a project advances.)

Criteria

GOAL 1:	<i>TO IMPLEMENT UNIFIED REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES.</i>	Score
	Develop mechanisms to guide the implementation of regional economic development initiatives.	1
	Foster and promote regional economic and workforce development.	1
	Strengthen and expand economic cooperation and collaboration regionally and beyond our borders.	1
	Develop mechanisms, as appropriate, to respond to unexpected economic losses.	1
GOAL 2:	<i>TO ADVANCE THE REGION'S ECONOMIC PROGRESS THROUGH THE USE OF CURRENT AND PERTINENT DATA.</i>	Score
	Maintain and expand data and information collection capacity for regional analysis and performance evaluation.	1
	Proactively identify and assess the challenges and changes in the economic and demographic conditions of the region.	1

	Identify and quantify emerging and changing conditions of business and industry.	1
GOAL 3:	<i>TO INCREASE THE ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS OF THE REGION IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY.</i>	Score
	Proactively retain and expand regionally based and locally emerging businesses and industries.	1
	Provide a comprehensive package of business development resources to the region's established and emerging businesses.	1
	Encourage economic vitality of emerging industry clusters, the creative economy and innovative businesses in the region.	1
	Expand regional capacities to inventory and market sites and buildings for the region's economic development	1
	Attract new businesses and industries to the region to expand the region's economy.	1
GOAL 4:	<i>TO STABILIZE AND STRENGTHEN OF THE REGION'S WORKFORCE.</i>	Score
	Develop a well-educated and highly skilled workforce of all ages to stabilize and expand the regional labor pool.	1
	Align educational offerings and workforce development programs with the evolving needs of the marketplace.	1
	Enhance and position the regional workforce system to align with and support regional job seekers and business needs.	1
GOAL 5:	<i>TO ADVANCE HIGH-QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENTS TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT, REDEVELOPMENT AND REVITALIZATION OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT.</i>	Score
	Provide a 21st Century capable telecommunications infrastructure throughout the region.	1
	Maintain and upgrade the Region's transportation network.	1
	Support community-driven initiatives to improve our urban and town centers to stimulate economic activity.	1
	Build a modern, reliable and affordable energy network.	1
	Ensure the orderly expansion and upgrade of housing and other support facilities to accommodate the region's expanding economy needs.	1
GOAL 6:	<i>TO FACILITATE THE REGION'S ASSESSMENT, REMEDIATION AND REDEVELOPMENT OF BUILDINGS AND SITES.</i>	Score
	Support regional initiatives and efforts to address contaminated properties in the region.	1
	Create a mechanism for the redevelopment and reuse of underutilized mills and other buildings and sites.	1

Appendix G: Strategy Committee Agendas and Meeting Minutes

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JAMES MULLEN, Chair
SHEILA IRVIN, Vice-Chair
GALE LABELLE, Clerk
CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

NATHANIEL W. KARNES, A.I.C.P.
Executive Director

**Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee**

Tuesday, October 26, 2010, 12:30 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room, BRPC Office, 1 Fenn Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201

Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Background
3. Project Scope
 - a. Timeline
 - b. CEDS Document Outline
4. Logistics
 - a. Conflict of Interest Laws/ Open Meeting Laws
 - b. Committee Role (Level of structure, formality, Chair, schedule) ----- **Action Item**
5. 2011 CEDS Vision Statement ----- **Action Item**
 - a. Vision Statement Examples and Information
 - b. 2011 CEDS Vision Statement (Draft)
6. Outreach Plan ----- **Action Item**
 - a. Community/EDO Project Solicitation
 - b. Community/Regional Meetings
 - c. Focus/Work Groups (Discussion)
7. What Are the Berkshires?
 - a. A Snapshot of the Berkshire Region (Draft)
 - b. Berkshires Regional Analysis and Influences
 - i. Demographic Characteristics
 - ii. Economic Characteristics
8. Schedule Next Meeting (Tuesday, November 23, 2010 at 12:30pm)
9. Other Items?
10. Adjournment

City and Town Clerks: Please post this notice pursuant to M.G.L., Chapter 39, Section 23B

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
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SHEILA IRVIN, Vice-Chair
GALE LABELLE, Clerk
CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

NATHANIEL W. KARNS, A.I.C.P.
Executive Director

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee

Tuesday, October 26, 2010, 12:30 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room, BRPC Office, 1 Fenn Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201

Committee Members

Kristine Hazzard <u>X</u>	Roger Bolton <u>X</u>	Heather Boulger <u>AB</u>	David Rooney <u>AB</u>
Kevin O'Donnell <u>X</u>	Keith Girouard <u>X</u>	Mike Nuvalle <u>AB</u>	Laury Epstein <u>X</u>
Mike Supranowicz <u>AB</u>	Lauri Klefos <u>X</u>	Michael Hoffmann <u>AB</u>	Christine Ludwiszewski <u>X</u>
Eleanore Velez <u>X</u>	Deanna Ruffer <u>X</u>	Ann Dobrowolski (Alt) <u>X</u>	Helena Fruscio <u>X</u>
Tim Geller <u>X</u>	Robert Wilson <u>X</u>	Brenda Burdick <u>X</u>	Mark Berman <u>X</u>

BRPC Staff

Nathaniel Karns X Thomas Matuszko X Daniel Sexton X Mark Maloy X

Public

Allison Johnson X

Meeting Minutes

The first CEDS Strategy Committee meeting of the 2011 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy process was convened at 12:40pm on October 26th, 2010 in the large conference room of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC), located at 1 Fenn Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201.

Mr. Matuszko, BRPC Assistant Director, introduced himself and then briefly explained why everyone was asked to the meeting. The meeting was convened to establish a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Strategy Committee, whom will oversee the development of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Berkshire Region.

1. Introductions

Mr. Matuszko introduced the members of the BRPC team that will be facilitating the CEDS process and developing the final document. He explained that the members of Committee that had acknowledged their ability to attend were present and that there were a number of members arriving late, due to prior engagement. Mr. Matuszko asked all the Committee members to introduce themselves and their organization affiliation.

Mr. Matuszko then explained that the CEDS Strategy Committee is a sub-committee of BRPC; therefore, is considered a public body is subject to the Open Meeting law and that the meeting is being recorded. Further discussion of the Open Meeting law and other laws that the Committee is bound by will be discussed later in the meeting. Mr. Matuszko invited others to record the meeting if they wished. He explained that minutes of the meeting will be developed and available for review at the following meeting. As a regional entity, BRPC is required to post this meeting at all municipalities throughout the region.

2. Background

Mr. Matuszko then provided the Committee with a brief background of the CEDS planning process and its origins from the Economic Development Administration (EDA). A CEDS is primarily used by a region to access the various EDA funding and grant programs. The CEDS process is an on-going participatory economic planning process that requires periodic updates. The last CEDS accepted by the EDA for the Berkshire Region was completed in 2001. In 2004, an effort was undertaken to update the Berkshire CEDS, but was never finalized or approved of by the EDA. In 2009, BRPC approached the EDA with the intent of securing funding for an update to the 2001 CEDS. Due to some logistical and approval issues, this CEDS process hasn't been able to begin until now.

Subsequently, Mr. Matuszko explained why and how the individuals present today were selected to participate on the CEDS Strategy Committee. The make-up of the Committee was based on EDA requirements which stipulated that the committee must represent a broad and diverse background of individuals and organizations. While the EDA requirements are important, Staff strived to select a group of individuals that encompassed and embodied the interests, a wealth of experiences and knowledge of the region's economic situation. A Committee member's role is primarily to provide BRPC staff with guidance and advice throughout the process and the documents development, while ensuring the process is collaborative and cooperative in nature. In certain instances, the Committee may be called upon to advocate for the process and document. It is envisioned, however, that BRPC staff would handle most of the work of preparing the document.

Following this explanation, the Committee was solicited for additional questions. Seeing none, Mr. Matuszko turned over the floor to Mr. Sexton to discuss the "Project Scope."

3. Project Scope

a. Timeline

Mr. Sexton began by explaining the draft timeline for the CEDS process and CEDS Strategy Committee involvement. This document laid out key roles or components of the CEDS document that the Committee would be asked to review and comment on during the ambitious schedule for this CEDS process. A number of highlights from this discussion included:

- Staff is anticipating a 6 meeting schedule for the Committee;
- Due to availability of members, meetings will be strategically scheduled on Tuesdays;
- There will not be a meeting during the month of December, due to the holiday season;
- Due to the short project timeframe and the large number of aspects to be reviewed and included in the document, it is anticipated that each meeting will be heavily loaded;
- The 30-day Public Comment Period, as required by the EDA, has been accounted for in the proposed project timeline; and
- The deadline for completion of this CEDS process is April 30, 2011.

Mr. Sexton asked the Committee if there were any questions or problems with the proposed draft timeline, specifically in terms of the proposed Tuesday meeting dates. Seeing none, Mr. Sexton moved onto the next agenda item.

b. CEDS Document Outline

Mr. Sexton then discussed the proposed CEDS document outline, by explaining the origin of the documents language. He then explained that the development of this document was based on previous CEDS planning efforts undertaken in Berkshire County; the review of CEDS completed for other regions throughout Massachusetts, New York and Vermont; by examining the EDA requirements; and by reviewing the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' CEDS. He then discussed the outlines structure and briefly explained each chapter of the outline.

Following staff's overview of the proposed outline for the CEDS document, the Committee engaged in a brief discussion. Key points or questions that stemmed from this discussion, chapter specific, included:

What Are the Berkshires?

- Will 2010 Census data be available for this CEDS process?
- What is the origin of the different characteristics and components of the *Berkshires Regional Analysis and Influence* section of the document? Why is it organized or structured the way it is?
- There were a couple topics or components in the *Berkshires Regional Analysis and Influence* section that Committee members felt were missing, not given enough emphasis and/or should be discuss in multiple characteristics (i.e. historic/cultural component, housing starts, entrepreneurs, agricultural industry and economy, health status, tourism, innovation and job training)

- What is the methodology or plan for the presentation of job loss in the region? If data from the 2000 Census is to be used to present this information we're going to be inhibiting our efforts from the start, since much of the region's job loss happened post 2000.

What is the Action Plan for the Berkshires?

- In addition to the goals and adjectives extracted from the 2004 Berkshire CEDS and Berkshire Blueprint, a Committee member felt that some, if not all, of the goals and objectives from the Berkshire Creative Economy report should be added to the list of goals and objectives for this CEDS process.

Methodology for State Cooperation, Consistency and Integration

- What is the status of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts CEDS planning efforts?
- What level of cooperation between the state and region for this process is required by EDA and who at the Commonwealth is the point of contact for CEDS processes?

Based on the comments and questions that were raised, staff will be providing information on a couple items to the Committee at the following meeting, which included:

1. A breakdown of all the potential EDA funding sources, emphasis and programs that this document may facilitate access/application too; and
2. A follow-up conversation on the EDA requirements, specifically how they apply to the structure or outline of the CEDS document.

Staff was also tasked to incorporate or re-organize the components of the Berkshires Regional Analysis and Influences section of the document.

Mr. Sexton then asked the Committee if there were any further questions. Seeing none, Mr. Sexton turned the floor over to Mr. Karns to discuss Logistics.

4. Logistics

a. Conflict of Interest Laws/ Open Meeting Laws

Mr. Karns explained that this is an official committee of the BRPC and with last year's changes to the Open Meeting and Ethic laws all the members of the CEDS Strategy Committee are classified as municipal employees by virtue of your membership. Therefore, each member must comply with the requirements for each of those laws. To document each Committee member's receipt of the Open Meeting law documents, three enclosures, Committee members must complete the Certification of Receipt form (blue) by signing, dating and returned it to BRPC staff. Then to comply with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics laws, each Committee member must complete the Certificate of Receipt form (Yellow or Gold) by signing, dating and returning it to BRPC staff.

Mr. Sexton added that each Committee member is required to complete an on-line Conflict of Interest and Ethics quiz and return the Certificate of Completion to BRPC staff. Mr. Sexton explained that he would be sending all the Committee members the webpage address for the Conflict of Interest and Ethics quiz via e-mail later in the week.

b. Committee Role (Level of structure, formality, Chair, schedule) ----- Action Item

Mr. Matuszko then began discussing the Committee's role within the greater CEDS process and the logistical aspects of the Committee (i.e. function, structure and schedule). As was stated earlier, Staff envisioned the Committee as guiding and overseeing the development of the CEDS document and process. The EDA requires that the Committee be composed with a diverse structure of individuals, specifically those from the private sector and a diverse background of stakeholder groups. This is a change from past CEDS requirements, in which the composition of the Committee was geared more towards municipalities.

He then asked, "What the wish of the Committee was in terms of formal structure?" He explained that the Committee could be an "ad-hoc" committee that follows Report's Rules of Order or a more formal committee that had established bylaws. Consideration should also be given to whether a Chair is needed and/or wanted. He did caution that a Chair should not be a member of BRPC staff. A few brief comments were made by Committee members, following which it was determined that the Committee should be "ad-hoc" in nature and follow Robert's Rules of Order. The decision to establish a Chair required much more discussion. One member of the Committee was concerned that if a Committee member could potentially submit a project idea, but then would be asked to objectively rank other projects that this may creates a conflict. Another Committee member asked, "Why the 2004 CEDS planning effort failed?" Mr. Karns and a number of previous CEDS Committee members explained why the 2004 CEDS planning effort failed. Following that discussion and the raised concern, it was suggested that a moderator be established to officiate the Committee's meetings.

Roger Bolton made a motion, which stated: BRPC shall designate a member of its staff to be a moderator for the meetings of the CEDS Strategy Committee. This motion was seconded by Lauri Klefos. A vote on the motion was requested by Mr. Matuszko. All Committee members voted in favor of the motion, thus the motion passed

A Committee member then asked, "What lines of communication have been opened or what efforts have been made to ensure that the issues of the 2004 CEDS process would not happen again?" It was suggested that the Committee be briefed on the EDA approval process and the list or required signatures at the next meeting. Mr. Matuszko identified that information surrounding the approval process will be provided to the Committee at the next meeting.

Mr. Karns also mentioned the importance of opening a line of communication between the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development or their designee to discuss the 2011 Berkshire CEDS. This communication or contact will help develop the collaboration component of this CEDS and will ensure the Committees efforts and plans mesh with Commonwealth's CEDS process or economic development plans. A Committee member requested that staff briefly discuss the status of the State's CEDS process and economic planning efforts at the next meeting.

A Committee member then raised the issue of schedules, specifically concerning the inconsistencies of the next meeting date as presented on the meeting agenda and the project timeline. Staff clarified that the next proposed CEDS Strategy Committee meeting was slated for November 30, 2010. All the present Committee members agreed this date was acceptable. That being said, Mr. Matuszko initiated a broader discussion of the CEDS Strategy Committee meeting schedule. He explained that staff has proposed all meetings of the Committee to be held on Tuesdays at 12:30 pm once a month, except for December. Mr. Matuszko inquired whether there were issues with this date and time. Seeing none, it was decided that all meetings of the Committee will be held as identified, unless a conflict arose.

A follow-up question pertaining to the status of the Commonwealths CEDS process, specifically in terms of its focus and structure on the regional perspective, was asked by a Committee member. Mr. Matuszko explained where he understood the Commonwealth's economic planning efforts to be. He again offered to provide the Committee with additional information on this matter at the next meeting.

Additionally, a Committee member raised questions concerning: 1) Is it appropriate or possible to have an alternate attend on behalf of a Committee member? 2) Does that alternate have the voting power of the Committee member? Following some discussion, it was determined that alternatives were okay. It was determined though that BRPC must be notified in advance of an alternate's attendance. Staff explained that all alternates attending CEDS Strategy Committee meetings must be apprised of current topics and discuss, since there would be no time allotted to bring people up-to-speed. Mr. Matuszko also mentioned that the upfront notification of alternates was to ensure there would a quorum and so BRPC could accurately order food. Notification of an alternate's attendances should be submitted to BRPC following the posting of the meeting agenda and be no later than one week before the meeting.

Mr. Matuszko then asked the Committee if there were any further questions. Seeing none, Mr. Matuszko turned the floor over to Mr. Sexton to discuss the Vision Statement.

5. 2011 CEDS Vision Statement ----- Action Item

a. Vision Statement Examples and Information

Mr. Sexton began by explaining and reading the vision statement examples (the 2001 CEDS, the draft 2004 CEDS and the Berkshire Blueprint's – Long-Term Economic Strategy) that were used to develop the draft 2011 CEDS Vision Statement. He noted that because it was still considered relevant and appropriate to the economic situation of the region, Staff selected the draft 2004 CEDS Vision Statement as the proposed language for the 2011 CEDS document. Staff emphasized that the CEDS process is evolving; therefore, the Committee should consider holding off any final decision on the vision statement until the review and development of the "*What Are the Berkshires?*" chapter of the CEDS document is complete.

b. 2011 CEDS Vision Statement (Draft)

Following staff's explanation of the proposed vision statement, the Committee engaged in a discussion of what elements, language and structure the vision statement should include. There was a question posed by Staff pertaining to the Committee's anticipated intent for the CEDS document. More specifically, Staff asked whether the hope was to create a document that would solely be used to pursue just EDA funds or if there a wish to broaden

the intent of the document so it could be used for other economic funding sources. Many of those alternative funding sources are pursued by other organizations, many of which Committee members represent. Some key points generated during this discussion also included:

- Keeping the statement brief (maybe 2 sentence maximum), modern tone and simple.
- Include language or terms like collaboration, creativity, equity or equitable, innovation, hotbed and all encompassing.
- The structure of the statement should incorporate sense of tense, primarily future.
- The statement should be inspirational, yet be balanced and relevant.
- It is important to stress the cultural richness.

To help guide staff's development of a revised vision statement, Committee members began developing revised language and/or directed staff to other organization's vision statement, such as Berkshire 1 or the Berkshire Visitors Bureau, to use as references.

In the interest of time, Mr. Matuszko indicated that staff would take into consideration all of the Committee's comments discussed today and develop a revised vision statement. That being said, Mr. Matuszko shifted the discussion to the next agenda item. Mr. Matuszko turned the floor over to Mr. Sexton to discuss the Outreach Plan.

6. Outreach Plan ----- Action Item

a. Community/EDO Project Solicitation/Meetings/Focus Groups

Mr. Sexton started by explaining to the Committee the importance of have a clear and open outreach process, so that issues of the past were not repeated. He then explained how BRPC had distributed mailings to all 32 municipalities within the region (i.e. Town Board of Selectmen, Town Administrators/Managers and/or their designee) on October 1, 2010 and that another mailing had been sent to a handful of economic development organizations (EDO) on October 15, 2010. Specific to the list of EDO's, staff indicated that they didn't feel the list of solicited EDOs was all-inclusive and hoped that Committee members would suggest additional groups or organizations to solicit. Staff explained how they had hoped Committee members would also be able to help spread the word or initiate conversations on the CEDS process with their constituencies and professional networks. Staff then mentioned to the Committee that 4 communities had responded to the mailer and that 17 projects were currently being proposed. To allow enough time for communities, individuals and organizations to response to the solicitations, Staff explained that the public solicitation process would continue until the end of the year. Mr. Sexton explained that project ideas would be presented to the Committee sometime in January or February. A member of the Committee asked staff to clarify what exactly had been included in the initial project solicitations. Mr. Sexton then explained that with each mailer the following had been included: a CEDS introduction letter, a County Snapshot and a Project Solicitation form.

Following staff's overview of the mailers, the Committee engaged in a brief discussion. Key points or questions that stemmed from this discussion included:

- Are the project solicitations just limited to municipalities or can the organizations, such as those that the Committee is comprised of, submit project proposals?
- What types of project proposals can be submitted?
- What organizations were included in the EDO mailer?

As a follow-up to the questions above, Staff explained that the submission of project proposals was open to everyone. Additionally, Staff explained that project ideas could cover a broad range of topics, which could be potentially funded from other sources, and that the EDA's regulations did not restrict the incorporation of project ideas that potentially would be funded through other sources. Mr. Matuszko explained further that BRPC had planned to conduct meetings with the core communities (i.e. North Adams, Adam, Pittsfield, Great Barrington, Lanesborough, Lenox, Lee, etc.) within the valley corridor as needed, but didn't intend to omit the outlying smaller communities. Upon request, those smaller communities could schedule meetings of their own or attend the meetings within the larger communities. Since there were concerns regarding the completeness of the EDO solicitation list, the Committee asked that the initial distribution list be provided to the Committee for review. Staff asked the Committee to provide suggestions of other organizations or individuals that should be solicited.

A follow-up line of questions from the Committee included:

- Are we ignoring the private sector?
- How can the Committee help in the solicitation of project proposals to ensure that the outreach process is transparent?

Staff explained that the project solicitations are open to everyone. To ensure a transparent outreach process, Staff

was considering the idea of utilizing focus/working groups. Mr. Sexton explained that after reviewing other CEDS planning efforts, each region utilized focus/working groups differently. Possible focus/work group configurations could be: 1) A sub-committee focusing on a broad solicitation for project ideas throughout the region; or 2) A number of sub-committees that focused their outreach on special interest groups or sectors.

To better understand and help staff in their development of a broader outreach plan, Committee members asked again for clarification of the EDA requirements, they wanted an element of education added to outreach efforts and most of all they wanted to be involved. Committee members acknowledge that to have a broad component of outreach, they needed to provide cooperation and collaborate to those outreach efforts.

Additionally, a Committee member asked, "Has there been an official press release or public notice published on the CEDS processes in the regional news outlets?" Staff said, "No, but indicated it will approach a number of the regional news outlets."

7. What Are the Berkshires?

- a. **A Snapshot of the Berkshire Region (Draft)**
- b. **Berkshires Regional Analysis and Influences**
 - i. **Demographic Characteristics**
 - ii. **Economic Characteristics**

Due to a lack of time this item was not discuss at this meeting.

8. Schedule Next Meeting (Tuesday, November 30, 2010 at 12:30pm)

Committee members agreed to hold the next CEDS Strategy Committee meeting on Tuesday, November 30th, 2010 at 12:30pm

9. Other Items?

No items were raised.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:40pm.

Documents distributed at the meeting included:

Meeting Agenda

A list of the CEDS Strategy Committee members and their affiliations

A U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, CEDS Flyer

A copy of the Interim Final Rule on 13 CFR Chapter III, specifically parts 300 and 303

A timeline of the CEDS Process

A draft outline of the 2011 CEDS Document

A copy of 940 CMR 29.00: Open Meeting Law Regulations

A copy of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: Open meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18-25

A copy of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: Open Meeting Law Guide

A Certification of Receipt of the Open Meeting Law Materials

A copy of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: Conflict of Interest Law for Municipal Employees

A Certification of Receipt of the Conflict of Interest Law for Municipal Employees

A Berkshire County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Flyer

A draft of the "Introduction to CEDS Program" section

A copy of the 2001 CEDS Vision Statement

A copy of the draft 2004 CEDS Vision Statement

A copy of the 2006 Berkshire Blueprint Berkshire County Long-Term Economic Strategy

A draft of the "A Vision Statement for the Berkshires" section

A draft of the "Berkshire CEDS Process" section

A copy of the public outreach/project solicitation materials

A draft of the "What are the Berkshires" section

A copy of the proposed 2011 CEDS Data Sets

Examples of data to be included in the 2011 CEDS

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**Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee**

*Tuesday, November 30th, 2010, 12:30 PM
2nd Floor Conference Room, BRPC Office, 1 Fenn Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201*

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes
3. Public Comments (Non-Agenda Items)
4. 2011 CEDS – What are the Berkshires?
 - a. A Snapshot of the Berkshire Region (Draft)
 - b. Berkshires Regional Analysis and Influences (Draft)
 - i. Demographic Characteristics
 - ii. Economic Characteristics
 - iii. Environmental/Geographical Characteristics
 - iv. Governmental Characteristics
 - v. Social Characteristics
 - vi. Transportation/Infrastructure Characteristics
 - c. Cluster Factors in the Berkshire
5. CEDS Information
 - a. CEDS Structure Requirements
 - b. EDA Funding Opportunities
 - c. EDA Approval Process
 - d. State Engagement w/CEDS Process
6. 2011 CEDS Vision Statement (Revised)
 - a. 2011 CEDS Vision Statement (Revised Draft)
7. Update of On-going Activities
 - a. Regional Meetings
 - b. Additional Organizations Sent Project Solicitations
8. Schedule Next Meeting (Tuesday, January 11th, 2011 at 12:30pm)
9. Other Items?
10. Adjournment

City and Town Clerks: Please post this notice pursuant to M.G.L., Chapter 39, Section 23B

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David Rooney Resigned Kevin O'Donnell X Keith Girouard X Mike Nuvallie AB
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Helena Fruscio X Tim Geller X Robert Wilson X Brenda Burdick AB Mark Berman X

BRPC Staff

Nathaniel Karns X Thomas Matuszko X Daniel Sexton X Mark Maloy X

Public

Allison Johnson X

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order

The November 30, 2010 meeting of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Strategy Committee was convened at 12:32 pm. Mr. Matuszko explained that he would be the moderator for this meeting and that the meeting was being recorded in accordance with the Open Meeting law. Mr. Matuszko then asked if there was anyone present whom wished to recorded the meeting as well? Seeing none the meeting began.

Seeing that there were new faces at the meeting, Mr. Matuszko asked that everyone introduce themselves.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Matuszko asked for approved of the meeting minutes from the October 26, 2010 meeting of the CEDS Strategy Committee.

Mr. Hoffmann made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Ms. Hazzard. Mr. Matuszko then asked for unanimous consent, seeing no objections the motion passed.

3. Public Comments (Non-Agenda Items)

Mr. Matuszko then explained that this was a public meeting being held by Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and asked if there was anyone present whom wished to speak on a non-agenda item? Seeing none, Mr. Matuszko then moved to the "What are the Berkshires" agenda item.

4. 2011 CEDS – What are the Berkshires?

a. A Snapshot of the Berkshire Region (Draft)

b. Berkshires Regional Analysis and Influences (Draft)

Mr. Matuszko briefly explained that the following presentation would discuss the economic situation of the Berkshires through a review of demographic, economic, environmental/geographical, governmental, social, infrastructure and clustering industry data. Throughout the presentation, made by Mr. Maloy and Mr. Sexton, they will discuss their analysis of the data, touch on the major trends and highlight some potential conclusions that can be drawn from the data. Mr. Matuszko asked the Committee to keep in mind the major trends and highlights of the data, since at the next meeting (January 11th) the Committee the goals and objectives for the CEDS report will be set. That being said, Mr. Matuszko turned to floor over to Mr. Maloy and Mr. Sexton.

Mr. Maloy began with an explanation on how the data had been gathered (i.e. source) and noted that comparisons had been made with adjacent economic regions, the state and the nation. In certain instances, data was not available or was not comparable with previous data sets; therefore, the data was presented as consistently as possible. Mr. Sexton also explained that page numbers had been added to the presentations slides to help orient the Committee during the presentation, those page numbers correlate to pages in the meeting packet.

Mr. Maloy then began the presentation. The key discussion points or questions brought up during the presentation by the Committee, broken down by data characteristic, included:

i. Demographic Characteristics

- The downward population trend
- Population loss of young adults (20-35 years of age)
- Population growth of aging adults (45-65 and 75-85 years of age)
- Is there an organized movement of people to the Berkshire taking place?
- Can a statement be incorporated to acknowledge the seasonal shift of population and the economic affects?

i. Economic Characteristics

- What is the usefulness and validity of the CDFIF data?
- Could the Creative Community be highlighted within the economic characteristics section?
- Speak to the fact that the retail industry is indicative of the population trend and the incremental growth of the professional industry.
- Where does e-commerce fit in the industry sectors?
- Change Table 3 to actually represent the top ten employers in the County. Locate a different source for this data (Chambers of Commerce). Limit to businesses that are above 500 employees.
- The end of the Northeast Dairy Compact is a potential reason for the drop in the annual market value of agricultural products for Berkshire County.
- A number of Committee members identified that they had potential sources for entrepreneurial data. Those members will provide that information to BRPC staff.
- Include information on the number of people employed as a proportion of the working age population.
- Try to differentiate between earned and unearned income within the median household income data.
- A comparison of industry changes with adjacent economic regions, state and nationally would help to indicate where Berkshire County is at.

ii. Environmental/Geographical Characteristics

- Update Land Use map to take into consideration current zoning.
- Correct the labeling on Table 10, so the information being presented is less confusing.

iii. Governmental Characteristics

- Incorporate some discussion of how BRPC fits within the regional structure as a public body corporate (sub-state district) and its unique enabling legislation.
- Give emphasis to the fact that Massachusetts is much more heavily regulated than other states.
- In Table 11, correct/verify the label and data for the "Tax Rate %" column. It should be a millage rate.

iv. Social Characteristics

- Note that the Census data didn't provide associate's degree data in the 1980 Census.
- Work with BCREB to ensure appropriate and adequate discussion and representation is given to vocational training opportunities.

- Berkshire County has a larger pool of less educated workers in comparison to the State and adjacent economic regions.
- Berkshire County's greatest export is its students leaving for higher education opportunities.
- A large percentage of Berkshire County's housing stock is aging. This is similar to the New England area in general.
- Berkshire County has a smaller percentage of families that are burdened by their housing costs. A general rule is to not dedicate more than 30% of your income towards housing.
- Proportionally, Berkshire County is doing okay with housing starts.
- Table 12 does speak to home values; however, second homes are most likely skewing this data and should be discussed. There potentially may be an effect on home sale prices because of second homes as well. Find and incorporate data on second/seasonal homes.

v. Transportation/Infrastructure Characteristics

- Speak about the movement of goods in terms of infrastructure capacity.
- As it pertains to emerging industries or the region economy look into the rates, capacity and the availability within the region to distribute good. Draw a correlation to e-commerce/new economy.
- Edit language within the draft section to include the Town of Monterey as an underserved community for wireless.
- Include discussion pertaining to broadband, specifically speaking to the last mile issue. The state's focus is on the mid-mile.
- Speak more about the fact that Berkshire County is a water rich area, excluding Lenox.
- Since most of the water and sewer systems were designed and constructed to handle capacity needs for manufacturing companies like GE many communities have excess capacity available.
- More emphasis should be given to the aging water and sewer systems.
- Add mapping for water and waste water systems within the county.
- Include a cost comparison of electricity pricing between licensed electric companies within the state.

a. Cluster Factors in the Berkshire

- Review the calculation in the vertical axis for the cluster graph.
- Can the cluster graph show change over time for the county and nation?

To recap the data discussion, Mr. Maloy highlighted some of the key points and trends to consider when thinking ahead to the next meeting where the goals, objectives and project priorities for the CEDS report will be discussed. He then asked Committee to identify other key points to consider. Some ideas or thoughts generated by Committee members included:

- Speaking to the training capacity within the region's educational/training institutions.
- How could a recently released document entitled, "The 2010 State New Economy Index: Benchmarking Economic Transformation in the States" be incorporated into the CEDS? Staff indicated that a copy of the document would be posted to the CEDS webpage for all the Committee members to review.
- How could the vacant manufacturing mills factor or fit into the economic situation of the region. Mr. Matuszko explained that the closed mills are both an asset and a barrier.
- Another point mentioned, was to give more emphasis to the agricultural industry to modernize agricultural techniques and technologies.
- A Committee member identified that he may have a source for data pertaining to capital infusion.

Mr. Matuszko thanked the Committee for actively participating and contributing to the meeting. He mentioned, as the development of this document progresses staff will keep the key points discussed today in mind. As much as possible those ideas, points, and thoughts will be incorporated into the final report. Mr. Matuszko cautioned that this is an evolving process which may necessitate changes as it progresses.

Mr. Matuszko then asked the Committee if there were any further questions. Seeing none, Mr. Matuszko moved the discussion to CEDS Information.

5. CEDS Information

a. CEDS Structure Requirements

Mr. Matuszko began by explaining that the EDA's requirements for the structure of the CEDS were based on 13 CFR Chapter III of the Interim Final Rule. He clarified by saying, "Although the Berkshire CEDS was required to comply with the EDA mandates it could still be developed under a broader context so other funding avenues can be

pursued. When the EDA reviews the CEDS for its approval they will compare it against the adopted regulations. A copy of those regulations have been included in the meeting packet for reference.

b. EDA Funding Opportunities

Another follow-up from last meeting, Committee members had asked for clarification on the EDA's programs and funding opportunities and their available. Mr. Sexton explained that the funding opportunities currently noticed, on the EDA webpage, are pending funding appropriations from Congress. Those notices solicited applications for Economic Development Assistance programs including: the Public Works, Economic Adjustment Assistance, GCCMIF, Planning and Local Technical Assistance programs.

c. EDA Approval Process

In terms of approval process, Mr. Matuszko explained that there are no signature requirements. It was mentioned by the EDA representative that letters of support should be included with the submission of the final CEDS report. If those letters could not be secured, the EDA identified that it would be willing to work with BRPC and the community to work through their differences. Ultimately, whether or not the CEDS is approved by EDA, is dependent upon its compliance with the EDA mandates. After speaking with adjacent Regional Planning Organizations, it looks as though the EDA has eased up and is more conducive to working with regions to get CEDS planning documents adopted.

d. State Engagement w/CEDS Process

At the last meeting, staff had eluded to the fact that there was an approved CEDS for the State of Massachusetts. After conversations with our EDA representative, this was found to be incorrect. The State of Massachusetts does not have an EDA approved CEDS, but does have an economic framework plan. According to a conversation with an individual at the state, a law was passed this past summer that stipulated the next administration would be required to develop an economic development plan. That being said, the Patrick Administration is planning to re-evaluate the framework plan and will subsequently develop an economic development plan, to be released this spring. The contact at the state also indicated a willingness or interest to incorporate regional level priorities within the State's plan. Also mentioned during this conversation, a representative from the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development could attend/speak at an upcoming Strategy Committee meeting. Staff will keep the Committee apprised of this potential meeting attendee.

Mr. Matuszko then asked the Committee if there were any further questions. Seeing none, Mr. Matuszko moved the discussion to the revised Vision Statement concepts.

6. 2011 CEDS Vision Statement (Revised)

a. 2011 CEDS Vision Statement (Revised Draft)

Mr. Matuszko explained that as a result of input from the Committee at the last meeting, staff had developed a couple of revised vision statement options. That being said, Committee members were asked to take these options home and evaluate them. Comments regarding the various options should be submitted to Mr. Sexton as soon as possible.

7. Update of On-going Activities

a. Regional Meetings

Mr. Sexton then provided the Committee with a brief update of ongoing outreach activities. During this update he mentioned:

- On October 16, 2010, staff presented an update to the BRPC Commission on the status of the CEDS process; and
- Three regional public meeting were being planned for the month on December in the Town of Great Barrington, the City of North Adams and the City of Pittsfield.
- Staff had contacted the Berkshire Eagle to determine if they would be interested in publishing an article regarding the CEDS process.

Mr. Sexton said, "Once the meeting dates and locations are solidified, staff will notify the CEDS Strategy Committee."

b. Additional Organizations Sent Project Solicitations

Based in comments from the Committee at the last meeting, staff solicited projects from an additional six economic development organizations. Many of those receiving solicitation in this round included members of the Committee.

8. Schedule Next Meeting (*Tuesday, January 11th, 2011 at 12:30pm*)

The Committee agreed to hold the next CEDS Strategy Committee meeting on Tuesday, January 11, 2011 at 12:30pm.

9. Other Items?

No items were raised.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45pm.

Documents distributed at the meeting included:

Meeting Agenda

Draft Minutes from the October 26, 2010 CEDS Strategy Committee meeting

A draft of the "*What are the Berkshires*" section

A copy of the Interim Final Rule on 13 CFR Chapter III, specifically part 303

A list of EDA Programs, Investment Priorities and Federal Funding Opportunities

A copy of the *2011 CEDS Vision Statement (Revised Concepts)*

A list of acronyms and abbreviations being used

A copy of the *2011 CEDS Project Proposal* list

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GALE LABELLE, Clerk
CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

NATHANIEL W. KARNS, A.I.C.P.
Executive Director

**Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee**

*Tuesday, January 11th, 2011, 12:30 PM
2nd Floor Conference Room, BRPC Office, 1 Fenn Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201*

Notice of Public Meeting

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes (November 30, 2010)
3. Public Comments (Non-Agenda Items)
4. 2011 CEDS – An Evaluation of the Berkshires Competitive Preparedness (Draft) ---- **Action Item**
 - a. Regional Weaknesses and Threats
 - b. Regional Opportunities and Strengths
 - c. Regional Investment
5. 2011 CEDS – The Action Plan for the Berkshires Economic Future (Draft) ---- **Action Item**
 - a. Goals and Objectives for the Berkshires
 - b. Berkshire CEDS Project Priorities
 - c. Vision Statement (Revisit)
6. 2011 CEDS – What are the Berkshires Section (Update)
7. Update of On-going Activities
 - a. Regional Public Meetings
 - b. Guest Speaker (Representative from Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development)
8. Schedule Next Meeting (Tuesday, February 15th, 2011 at 12:30pm)
9. Other Items
10. Adjournment

City and Town Clerks: Please post this notice pursuant to M.G.L., Chapter 39, Section 23B

In case of inclement weather, please call (413)442-1521 x15 to learn if your meeting is still scheduled.

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Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee

Tuesday, January 11, 2011, 12:30 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room, BRPC Office, 1 Fenn Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201

Committee Members

Kristine Hazzard X Roger Bolton X Heather Boulger X Kevin O'Donnell X Keith Girouard X Mike Nuvallie Y Laury Epstein X Mike Supranowicz AB Lauri Klefos X Michael Hoffman AB Christine Ludwizewski X Eleanore Velez X Deanna Ruffer AB Ann Dobrowolski (Alt) X Helena Fruscio X Tim Geller X Robert Wilson AB Brenda Burdick AB Andy Franks (Alt) X Mark Berman X

BRPC Staff

Nathaniel Karns X Thomas Matuszko X Daniel Sexton X Mark Maloy X

Public

Allison Johnson X Joe Sceds' X

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order

The January 11, 2011 meeting of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) Strategy Committee was convened at 12:32 pm. Mr. Matuszko explained that he would be the moderator for this meeting and that the meeting was being recorded in accordance with the Open Meeting law. Mr. Matuszko then asked if there was anyone present whom wished to record the meeting as well? Seeing none the meeting began.

Seeing that there were new faces at the meeting, Mr. Matuszko asked that everyone introduce themselves.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Matuszko asked for approved of the meeting minutes from the November 30, 2010 meeting of the CEDs Strategy Committee.

Mr. Bolton made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Girouard. Mr. Matuszko then asked for unanimous consent, seeing no objections the motion passed.

3. Public Comments (Non-Agenda Items)

Mr. Matuszko then explained that this was a public meeting being held by Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and asked if there was anyone present whom wished to speak on a non-agenda item? Seeing none, Mr. Matuszko then moved to the "An Evaluation of the Berkshires Competitive Preparedness" agenda item.

4. 2011 CEDS – An Evaluation of the Berkshires Competitive Preparedness (Draft)

Mr. Matuszko began by explaining that the evaluation section is intended to highlight Berkshire County's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (or SWOT), as well as highlight investments that have been made throughout the region. He explained that this section begins on page 9 of the meeting packet. That being said, Mr. Matuszko turned the floor over to Mr. Sexton to discuss/explain this section in greater detail.

Mr. Sexton briefly explained that the identification of the Region's SWOT is a requirement of the Economic Development Administration (EDA). The key points discussed during this section are the result of input gathered during the last CEDS Strategy Committee meeting and from the public during regional public meeting. Specifically, a number of Committee members provided input on investments that have been made in the region to facilitate economic growth or stability. He then began to discuss the specific components of the section

a. Regional Weaknesses and Threats

Mr. Sexton started by briefly discussing each weakness or threat. He explained that the paragraph behind each weakness or threat was meant to highlight the resulting affects and impacts each weakness or threat could or may be having on the region or its communities. Mr. Sexton also explained that staff was looking for concurrence from the Committee as to whether the list of weaknesses and threats was complete and whether there was additional language or information missing.

With that, the CEDS Strategy Committee discussed each weakness or threat. The Committee's input included:

General Comments:

- The language of this section should clearly correlate to the dynamics that have, are and continue to affect the region; thus reinforcing these points as weaknesses and threats.
- Build connections between the various sections of the report without being redundant.
- Add a category speaking to "Access to Capital," specifically early seed capital or start-up funds.
- Should the listing of the regional weaknesses and threats be prioritized, such as listing energy first? A follow-up discussion of this suggestion, by the Committee, agreed that prioritization is not necessary.
- It was suggested that the list of regional weaknesses and threats be reduced, such as eliminating population decline. A follow-up discussion of this suggestion, by the Committee, determined that certain categories should be consolidated (i.e. *Population* with *Uneven Stratification of Age Cohorts*).

Category Specific Comments:

Population Decline

- It was suggested this category be consolidated with the *Uneven Stratification of Age Cohorts* category.

Uneven Stratification of Age Cohorts

- The Region's aging population should be emphasized as a greater detriment to the region, as opposed to population decline.

Wage Shift and Median Family Household Income Drop

- Speak more specifically to the fact that this translates into lost sales.

Education Attainment Gap

- Spell out that we are lacking courses teaching basic trade skill sets (i.e. electricians, plumbers, etc). Although computer technicians are necessary, really separate the technical training or trade skill sets.
- Emphasize that none of the Region's educational institutions are really setup for trade or vocational training courses.
- Reference should also be given to the needs for trade individuals in the bio-tech fields.

Housing

- It was suggested that housing affordability wasn't an issue for all the Region's communities. Therefore, the language of this category should be tweaked to speak at a more sub-regional level. A follow-up discussion of this suggestion, by the Committee, determined that housing should be discussed at the regional level.

Built-Environment Constraints

- This category should also be included as a strength and opportunity. Highlighting the fact that progress has been made to resolve issues such as the GE site in Pittsfield.

Environmental Development Constraints

- Speak to the limited availability of large developable tracts of land.

Funding Shortfalls

- Really highlight the slow and less diversified growth of the Region's property tax base. This is aggravated in Massachusetts by Proposition 2 ½.
- Consider renaming this category. Use a term that is more general.

Infrastructure

- Give more emphasis to the challenges facing build-out of the telecommunications infrastructure.
- Rename this category to *Physical and Technology Infrastructure*.

Energy Costs

- The last sentence of this category should speak to the transfer of cost to the customers and the reduced profits of owners.
- Consider consolidating this with the *Infrastructure* category.

Mr. Sexton then asked the Committee if there were any further comments on the Regional Threats and Weaknesses component. Seeing none, Mr. Sexton moved the discussion to the Regional Opportunities and Strengths component.

b. Regional Opportunities and Strengths

Before requesting input from the Committee, Mr. Sexton briefly discussed the regional strengths and opportunities that had been received thus far. It was suggested by the Committee that the discussion progress category by category, thus making the discussion easier to follow.

With that said, Mr. Sexton asked the Committee for input on the strengths and opportunities. Input received from the Committee included:

General Comments:

- It was suggested that the Regional Strengths and Opportunities be moved ahead of the Regional Weaknesses and Threats. This would make the report read more positively.
- Work to consolidate categories.
- The language of this component should be structured in a more positively tone.

Category Specific Comments:

Regional Collaboration

- Reinforce or reference the "People" as a major component of the collaboration within the region. Maybe as a subset or category.
- Highlight the regional collaborations that exist in the Berkshires (Berkshire Connect, 1 Berkshires, Berkshire Compact, etc.)
- Embellish the work being conducted on a daily basis by economic development organizations (i.e. PERC, Lee CDC, MassDevelopment, Community Development Finance Corporation, etc.).
- Mention how collaboration has opened the door for investment opportunities, such as with the State.

Culturally and Naturally Rich Environment

- Consolidate this category with the *High Quality of Living* category. A follow-up discussion of this suggestion, by the Committee, determined that these categories should be kept separate.
- Use the word "visitors." Highlight the long history of tourism in the region.

High Quality of Living

- Speak to the cost of living and how it's lower here. This creates a high quality of life.
- Avoid the use of terms like "right balance" and "High Quality of Living."
- Highlight or reinforce small businesses.

Educational Institutions

- It was suggested that the opportunity to provide trade or vocational training courses within the Region's educational institutions should be highlighted.
- Highlight the fact that the development of alternative energy infrastructure and the upgrading of mechanical equipment requires technical training.
- Speak to all levels of education. Don't limit the discussion to just higher level education. Speak to the K-12 system. Maybe note the Berkshire Educational Compact.
- Educational institutions provide a large amount of jobs, not just "moderate."
- Speak to alternative educational opportunities.
- Highlight the history of partnerships and the strength relationship between businesses and institutions.

Infrastructure

- Change the title of the category to *Physical and Technology Infrastructure*.
- Speak more broadly (i.e. regionally) or add more community examples.

Entrepreneurs/Small Businesses/Sole Proprietors

- Verify the information discussed in the first sentence of this component. If it is determined the information discussed in this sentence is not correct, the sentence should be deleted.
- Highlight the home-based business friendly bylaws that many of the Region's communities have.
- The last sentence could reference or reinforce the need for a Berkshire "Brand."
- This section should include the reference of number of patents that are generated within the region.
- Add the reference to Berkshire Creative.
- It is important to reference the national and international presence.

Railroad

- Fold this category into the *Physical and Technology Infrastructure* category.
- Substitute gas with terms like "gasoline" or "fuel."

Agriculture Production

- Move the last 2 or 3 sentences further up in the paragraph.
- Highlight the fact that the region has the capacity to produce our own food and be self sustaining in terms of food production.
- Speak to food securities and the associated transportation costs.
- Mention the fact that the region has a history of agricultural production and agri-tourism.
- Expand the discussion of production and processing in terms of value added produce.
- Mention Berkshire Grown.

Manufacturing Facilities

- Substitute "development" with "redevelopment mill sites."

Before transitioning to the Regional Investments component, Mr. Sexton asked the Committee if there were any strengths and opportunities missed? A Committee member suggested that alternative energy, specifically the possibility of wind turbines, should be added to the renamed *Physical and Technology Infrastructure* category. Mr. Matuszko then asked the Committee if there were any further comments on the Regional Opportunities and Strengths component. Seeing none, Mr. Matuszko moved the discussion to the Regional Investment section.

c. Regional Investment

Before beginning the discussion of the Regional Investments, Mr. Sexton cautioned that this was not a comprehensive list of investment. There are hundreds of investments being made throughout the region each year at various levels, which makes it difficult to track and list them all. He also mentioned that the investments discussed in this section are just meant to highlight the wide range of investments that have, are or will be made within the region.

Mr. Sexton then explained a couple of changes begin proposed by staff, which included: moving *Development Constraints* to the Program and Initiatives section, highlighting such projects as the Colonial Theatre or MassMoCA under the Physical Development section, and renaming the *Infrastructure* category to *Physical and Technology Infrastructure*. These changes are not represented in the Committee's meeting packet.

With that, the CEDS Strategy Committee began discussing the Regional Investments. The Committee's input included:

General Comments:

- Ms. Fruscio asked if she could help to re-write the Creative Economy component, since there was a number of incorrect reference made.

Since there were no component specific questions or comments made by the Committee for this section, Mr. Matuszko asked the Committee to forward any further input to Mr. Sexton.

Mr. Matuszko then moved the discussion to *The Action Plan for the Berkshires Economic Future* section.

5. 2011 CEDS – The Action Plan for the Berkshires Economic Future (Draft)

Mr. Matuszko began by explaining that this section is intended to give direction to how and what the CEDS report will accomplish. He then discussed the importance of having well thought out goals and objective, since they will be used as one of the evaluation criteria for the economic development proposals. Mr. Sexton mentioned that there have been 82 economic development proposals submitted and that project summaries for each proposal have been included in the meeting packet for the Committee to review.

There was a brief discussion of how prioritization could work, during which Committee members asked how the proposals would be ranks. Staff briefly explained that a comprehensive prioritization and ranking within subcategorizes is currently being proposed; however, the ultimate ranking structure was up to the Committee.

In the essence of time and noting some confusion from the Committee, Mr. Matuszko asked whether the Committee would prefer to begin discussing the proposed goals and objectives or work through proposal prioritization process. The Committee members agreed that it was important to define the goals and objectives for the CEDS report before discussing prioritization of proposals.

Mr. Sexton explained that the structure of the goals, objectives and implementing actions section, specifically highlighting how the language was developed. He mentioned that a number of Committee members had provided comments on the language before the Committee. A number of Committee members questioned whether the Vision Statement should be established before the goals and objective. It was also mentioned that the "New Economy" should be defined. That being said, Mr. Matuszko transitioned the discussion to establishing a Vision Statement.

c. Vision Statement (Revisit)

Mr. Matuszko began by solicited input from the Committee on the alternative concepts for the Vision Statement. Mr. Sexton mentioned that the language of the alternatives was developed from input received at the first meeting and e-mailed from the Committee. A couple Committee members proposed a few more word edits, making the language of the alternatives more consistent with important topics that have been suggested to be incorporated into the CEDS report (i.e. innovation, agriculture, entrepreneurship, etc).

Based on comments received from the Committee, Mr. Matuszko asked whether the First alternative could be eliminated. The Committee concurred. He then asked whether the Fourth alternative could be eliminated. The Committee concurred. With the Second and Third alternative remaining, a Committee member suggested eliminating the word "Industrial" from the Third alternative. Following that suggestion, a number of Committee members recommended that the Second alternative be eliminated. That said, Mr. Matuszko asked the Committee whether the Second alternative could be eliminated. The Committee concurred. A Committee member then asked that the second sentence, of the Third alternative, be reworked by replacing the word "to" with "we will."

Mr. Matuszko then asked for unanimous consent of the Third vision statement alternative, seeing no objections the Committee selected the Third vision statement alternative as amended.

The Committee then began discussing what should be included in the definition of the "New Economy." Mr. Girouard made a suggestion that incorporated the use of the Kauffman report, entitled *The 2010 State New Economy Index: Benchmarking Economic Transformation in the States*. Specifically, he recommended using the methodology and/or the five categories from the report as the basis for the New Economy definition. A couple Committee members asked Mr. Girouard to clarify what the five categories were. The categories from the Kauffman report included: Knowledge Jobs, Globalization, Economic Dynamism, Transformation to a Digital Economy, and Technological Innovation Capacity.

Mr. Matuszko asked whether the Committee agreed with Mr. Girouard's suggestion. Seeing no objections, Mr. Matuszko proposed that the Committee allow staff to develop and tweak this verbiage so it could fit within the CEDS report. The Committee agreed.

Mr. Matuszko then moved the discussion to goals and objectives.

a. Goals and Objectives for the Berkshires

Mr. Matuszko began by presenting the intent of the goals and objectives. To streamline the discussion, staff recommended discussing the language of each goal and objective individually. With that, Mr. Matuszko began discussion Goal #1.

The Committee's comments on the proposed goals and objectives included:

General Comments:

- The language of this section should be more general, but still descriptive and to the point.

Goal #1

- Eliminate the reference to the New Economy.
- This goal should end after "initiative."

Goal #1 Objectives

- The language of the first objective reads more like an action. It was suggested that that reference to a "standing Economic Development Committee" be replaced with "mechanism."

There was a discussion of how organizations should be referenced within the goals and objectives. At the conclusion of this conversation, the Committee agreed that specific organizations should not be included in the goals and objective, but could be inserted into the implementing actions. When a specific organization is identified, language should be added that allows for other regional partners to contribute to that action, such language could be "other regional partners."

Due to a lack of time, Mr. Matuszko asked the Committee whether they were interested in extending the meeting or scheduling an additional meeting. The Committee agreed that discussion on this item should be tabled and would be reconvened at a meeting scheduled for Tuesday, January 25, 2011.

Mr. Matuszko also asked the Committee if they wanted to continue the discussion at the next meeting with the verbiage proposed within this meeting's packet or allow staff the ability to further refine the sections language. The Committee determined that staff could begin refining the language. That being said, staff will provide the Committee with a revised set of goals and objectives by Friday, January 21, 2011.

b. Berkshire CEDS Project Priorities

Due to a lack of time this item was not discussed at this meeting.

6. 2011 CEDS – What are the Berkshires Section (Update)

Due to a lack of time this item was not discussed at this meeting.

7. Update of On-going Activities

a. Regional Public Meetings

b. Guest Speaker (Representative from Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development)

Due to a lack of time this item was not discussed at this meeting.

8. Schedule Next Meeting (Tuesday, February 15th, 2011 at 12:30pm)

Due to a lack of time and the need to continue discussion of the goals and objectives, the Committee agreed to hold an additional CEDS Strategy Committee meeting on Tuesday, January 25, 2011.

9. Other Items?

No items were raised.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45pm.

Documents distributed at the meeting included:

Meeting Agenda

A Meeting Agenda Brief

Draft Minutes from the November 30, 2010 CEDS Strategy Committee meeting

A draft of the *An Evaluation of the Berkshires Competitive Preparedness* section

A draft of *The Action Plan for Berkshire County's Economic Future* section

A *Proposal Description Summary* spreadsheet

A copy of the *A Vision Statement for the Berkshires* section

A breakdown of *2011 CEDS Vision Statement (Revised Concepts)*

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Executive Director

**Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee**

Tuesday, January 25, 2011, 12:30 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room, BRPC Office, 1 Fenn Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes
3. Public Comments (Non-Agenda Items)
4. 2011 CEDS – Goals and Objectives for the Berkshires
5. 2011 CEDS – Berkshire CEDS Project Priorities (Evaluation/Scoring)
6. Next Meeting (Tuesday, February 15th, 2011 at 12:30pm)
7. Other Items?
8. Adjournment

City and Town Clerks: Please post this notice pursuant to M.G.L., Chapter 39, Section 23B

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Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee

Tuesday, January 25, 2011, 12:30 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room, BRPC Office, 1 Fenn Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201

Committee Members

Kristine Hazzard X Roger Bolton X Heather Boulger AB Marya LaRoche X Kevin O'Donnell X
Keith Girouard X Mike Nuvalle X Laury Epstein X Mike Supranowicz X Lauri Klefos X
Michael Hoffman X Christine Ludwizewski X Eleanore Velez X Deanna Ruffer AB
Ann Dobrowolski (Alt) X Helena Fruscio X Tim Geller X Robert Wilson AB Brenda Burdick X
Mark Berman X

BRPC Staff

Nathaniel Karns X Thomas Matuszko X Daniel Sexton X Mark Maloy X

Public

Allison Johnson X

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order

The January 25, 2011 meeting of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) Strategy Committee was convened at 12:33 pm. Mr. Matuszko explained that this was the fourth CEDs Strategy Committee meeting held. He then explained that he would be the moderator for this meeting and that the meeting was being recorded in accordance with the Open Meeting law. Mr. Matuszko then asked if there was anyone present whom wished to record the meeting as well. Seeing none the meeting began.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Matuszko asked for approval of the meeting minutes from the January 11, 2011 meeting of the CEDs Strategy Committee.

Mr. Berman made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Mr. O'Donnell. Mr. Matuszko then asked for unanimous consent, seeing no objections the motion passed.

3. Public Comments (Non-Agenda Items)

Mr. Matuszko then explained that this was a public meeting being held by Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and asked if there was anyone present whom wished to speak on any non-agenda items? Seeing none, Mr. Matuszko then moved the discussion to the goals and objectives agenda item.

4. 2011 CEDs – Goals and Objectives for the Berkshires

Mr. Matuszko began by explaining that the proposed goals and objectives language before the Committee have been revised. The revised language takes into account comments and concerns raised by the Committee at the last meeting. He then mentioned that staff had distributed the proposed language to Committee members, prior to the meeting, to gather additional input. A number of Committee members did provide input, of which staff incorporated those comments into the language before the Committee today. Mr. Matuszko then explained that staff wanted to focus the discussion on the content of the proposed language. He also mentioned that staff wanted to make sure they were headed in the right direction and if the Committee saw fit, make a motion to approve the goals and objective.

Mr. Matuszko then discussed in more specific terms what the revisions consisted of. He explained that the language had been broadened so the statements were more general. He also mentioned that the generalizing of the goals and objectives language would allow for more specific discussion or direction to be incorporated into the action items (or the meat of the CEDS report). As the discussion of this sections language commenced, Mr. Matuszko encouraged Committee members to be thinking of potential action items that would fit under the goals and objectives.

With that said, Mr. Sexton initiated the discussion of the goals. He began by restating the Vision Statement and the general definition for the “New Economy” that the Committee had established at the last meeting. There were some concerns raised by Committee members regarding the proposed New Economy definition, specifically the term “Digital Economy” and where the definition should be located in the report. After briefly discussing the use of the term “Digital Economy,” the Committee determined that the use of the Kauffman report and its definition could remain. As part of this decision, the Committee asked that staff incorporate a more detail definition of the five categories from the Kauffman report as an appendix.

To reinforce this decision, Mr. Matuszko asked the Committee for unanimous consent to incorporate an appendix with the definitions of the categories from the Kauffman report. Seeing no objections the decision was approved.

Following this discussion, M. Matuszko began talking about the six proposed goals. He first highlighted the context or focus of each goal: Goal 1) an overall regional process; Goal 2) the right information to obtain; Goal 3) the region’s competitiveness, Goal 4) infrastructure to support economic development, Goal 5) a workforce to meet the needs of the region, and Goal 6) the redevelop/reuse of existing sites. Through these six goals, staff tried to capture and accommodate the concepts that embody the region’s economic situation and shift.

The Committee then began to discussing each goal. The Committee’s input provided through this discussion included:

- **It was asked whether the context of the goals included language that meets the EDA’s investment priorities.** *Mr. Matuszko explained that in general terms, yes. He also mentioned that staff tried to develop language that balanced the needs of the EDA’s funding programs, while also providing the leeway to pursue other funding programs and sources.*
- **It was mentioned that Goal 6 seemed more tactical then strategic and that it could be incorporated into Goal 4.** *Staff explained that the proposed language for this goal was intended to focus economic development through the reuse and redevelopment of existing site rather than suggesting there should be a focus on Greenfield development. A committee member mentioned that at the last meeting, it was highlighted that the lack of large tracts of developable land within the county was a weakness. In that context and through further discussion of the suggestion, by the Committee, it was agreed that Goal 6 should remain as a standalone goal.*
- **It was recommended that Goal 5 (Workforce) should become Goals 4 and then Goal 4 (Infrastructure) should become Goal 5.** *A follow-up discussion of this suggestion, by the Committee, determined that this suggestion should be made.*
- **It was recommended that certain language, such as “Public/Private Partnerships” and “Global Competitiveness,” should be incorporated into the goals were appropriate.** *More specifically, this suggestion proposed the term “Public/Private Partnerships” be built into Objective 3 of Goal 1 and that the term “Global Economy” could be incorporated into Goal 3. During further discussion of this suggestion, it was mentioned that public/private partnerships are covered fairly well in the Objective 3 of Goal 1. However, there should be language added that extends our partnerships beyond the region, Some example language suggested was “beyond our borders.” After further discussion of these suggestion, by the Committee, it was agreed the term “Global Economy” should be added to Goal 3 and that the phase “beyond our border” should be added to the third objective of Goal 1.*

- **It was recommended that a seventh goal be added, speaking more specifically to the Innovation and Creative side of the region’s economy.** *This suggestion was based on the fact that there is a growing sector of the region’s economy focused on innovation and creativity. Much like the redevelopment/reuse of old mill structures, the innovative and creative side of the economy has its own issues and development demands. It was mentioned that this type of language was already imbedded in Goal 3 and its subsequent objectives. During further discussion of this suggestion, by the Committee, it was determined that the addition of a seventh goal was not necessary since it was implied within other goals and objectives.*
- **It was recommended that if the intent was to use and define the “New Economy” as a major component of the CEDS, then the Committee may want to consider incorporating this term into the goals and objectives.** *A follow-up discussion of this suggestion, by the Committee, determined that the defining categories of the “New Economy” were already built-in or incorporated into the proposed goals and objectives; therefore it isn’t necessary to restate the term.*

Mr. Matuszko then transitioned the discussion to the objectives language. The Committee’s input on the proposed objectives included:

- **It was recommended that the last objective under Goal 6 should be incorporated under another goal.** *Following this suggestion, a discussion commenced to identify where the objective language should be incorporated or whether it was even necessary. The Committee suggested that if this objective was kept, the language should be modified. After considering some alternative language or concepts for the objective, it was suggested that the objective be moved to Goal 1. After further discussion, by the Committee, it was determined that last objective under Goal 6 should be moved to Goal 1 and re-worded to read, “Develop mechanisms to respond to unexpected economic losses.”*
- **It was recommended that the word “other” should be should be added to the last objective of the new Goal 5.** *A follow-up discussion of this suggestion, by the Committee, determined that this suggestion should be made.*
- **It was then recommended that the word “cities” in the Objective 3 of the new Goal 5 should be deleted.** *A follow-up discussion of this suggestion, by the Committee, determined that this suggestion should be made.*
- **It was recommended that within the first objective of Goal 1, the words “mechanism” and “initiative” should become plural.** *This suggestion was intended to give more focus to the multiple economic development initiatives happening throughout the region and to the economic development initiatives being undertaken at the community level. A follow-up discussion, by the Committee, determined that this suggestion should be made.*

Mr. Matuszko then asked the Committee if there were any remaining questions or concerns. Seeing none, Mr. Matuszko asked for a motion approving the language as amended by the Committee.

Ms. Epstein made a motion to approve the proposed goals and objective as modified by the Committee. This motion was seconded by Mr. O’Donnell. Mr. Matuszko then asked for unanimous consent, seeing no objections the motion passed.

Mr. Matuszko then moved the discussion to the Project Priorities Evaluation agenda item.

5. 2011 CEDS – Berkshire CEDS Project Priorities (Evaluation/Scoring)

Mr. Sexton began by discussion how the project proposals were submitted and noted that 82 proposals had been received. Per a slide shown to the Committee, Mr. Matuszko explained that staff had placed each proposal into 4 sub-categories, which included Education/Workforce Development, Planning/Program Initiatives, Infrastructure and Physical Development. Mr. Sexton then explained that staff had consolidated or grouped a number of similar proposals under one consolidated proposal. This consolidation process was intended to reduce the number of duplicated projects the Committee would have to review and to streamline the evaluation/scoring process.

Before discussion of the evaluation/scoring process continued, staff requested that the Committee concur with the proposal to consolidate duplicate proposals. Seeing no objections, it was determined that the staff’s consolidation of proposals was okay.

Mr. Matuszko then explained that the submitted project proposals contain varying levels of information. He mentioned that some project proponents were very diligent and descriptive in their application and that others were not so detailed. Staff explained that all applications were accepted regardless of content in an attempt to capture a broad sampling of the Region’s economic development projects. Staff did conduct follow-up phone calls with

project proponents to gather additional information, which has been incorporated into the *Project Description Summary* document.

Mr. Sexton then discussed the proposed evaluation/scoring process. He mentioned that there are three categories of evaluation criteria. It was recommended that the Committee evaluate/score the first two categories (*Economic Significance to the Region* and *2011 CEDS Goals and Objectives*), while staff would conduct the evaluation/scoring of the third category (*EDA Investment Priorities*). Mr. Matuszko then asked the Committee if they were comfortable with the concept of allowing staff to conduct the evaluation/scoring of the EDA Investment Priorities. The Committee discussed the proposed evaluation/scoring process and determined it would be acceptable for BRPC staff to assess the project proposals against the EDA Investment Priorities.

It was suggested, by a Committee member, that Committee members be allowed the option to evaluate/score project proposals against the EDA Investment Priorities, just to see how Committee member's scores rank against staff's. There were no objections to this request.

A Committee member then asked how the criterion for the *Economic Significance of the Region* category was developed. Mr. Sexton explained that the language for this category was developed by staff. Staff utilized concepts and content from the 2001 and 2004 CEDS planning processes, but made a number of minor modifications to take into consideration regional economic changes and priorities.

A Committee member then asked how project proposals could be evaluated/scored with incomplete applications, data that was estimated, and in general criteria that is very subjective. A follow-up comment, made by another Committee member, explained that the evaluation/scoring process will be a subjective. Each Committee member brings their own knowledge and perspective to the evaluation/scoring process, staff explained. Committee members will be making judgment calls, when information or data is suspect. Staff cautioned that many projects will score low. Mr. Karns also noted that as the scoring and subsequent ranking of proposals progresses, the better project proposal will rise to the top.

The conversation then transitioned to how the project would actually be ranked. Mr. Sexton explained that the scores from each Committee member for each project proposal would be tabulated and that the median score for each project proposal would then be established. Staff then explained that the median score would be used to rank (or prioritize) the projects. Staff explained that a possible way to prioritize the projects could be to break them up into "High, Medium and Low" priorities. Until the proposal scores are submitted, however, staff won't be able to suggest where the break-up should be or whether there is another prioritization structure that may work better. A Committee member noted that the *Economic Significance to the Region* criteria were weighted higher than the *2011 CEDS Goals and Objectives* criteria. Mr. Matuszko explained that they were intentionally weighted higher because staff identified the *Economic Significance to the Region* criteria to be more important. Mr. Karns mentioned that if the Committee was not satisfied with the results of the scoring and ranking that the project proposals could be reassessed.

A Committee member then asked that all Committee members and staff be mindful of proposals that may be underdeveloped. These proposals may have been submitted by an individual, organization or group that doesn't possess the capacity or understanding of the process to submit a complete application. Mr. Matuszko followed by mentioning that the CEDS is envisioned as an ongoing process. Proposals that are underdeveloped, but that still hold some level of importance could be identified so staff could work with those project proponents to develop a better project application next time. Mr. Matuszko then reinforced, to everyone, the need to conduct consistent scoring. Since proposals are not being scored at a group level and in some instances Committee members will be scoring their own project proposal, Committee members will need to internally regulate and ensure that their scoring is consistent and fair.

A Committee member then asked whether there would be an opportunity to discuss the project proposals and descriptions at the Committee level, prior to scoring. Mr. Matuszko said, "No." It was then suggested, by a Committee member that a more in-depth discussion of proposals, to really flesh-out the projects, could be conducted at the next meeting. It was also mentioned that this follow-up discussion may help Committee members establish a ranking structure and to identify top projects. Staff explained that the majority of the submitted proposals would require some type of subsequent grant application and that none of these proposals will receive automatic funding. There was no decision made whether follow-up discussions would happen.

Mr. Karns urged the Committee to just evaluate/score the project proposals the best they can. Mr. Matuszko also recommended that Committee members utilize the project materials and information that has been provided to them.

A Committee member then asked whether the evaluation/scoring of project proposals would be completed today or outside of a Committee meeting. Staff explained that the evaluation and scoring of proposals would be taking place outside of a regular Committee meeting. Mr. Sexton said the scoring worksheet would be e-mail to all Committee

members by the Friday following the meeting. A Committee member then asked how long they would have to evaluate/score the proposals. Staff explained that if they wanted to review the results by the next meeting the completed scoring worksheets would need to be back to staff by February 9th or 10th. The Committee determined that Thursday, February 10th would be preferred.

Mr. Sexton asked whether the Committee wanted to discuss each criterion or to run through a hypothetical project proposal. Seeing no interest by the Committee, Mr. Sexton then asked if there were any additional questions. No addition items were proposed.

6. Next Meeting (Tuesday, February 15th, 2011 at 12:30pm)

The Committee agreed to hold the next CEDS Strategy Committee meeting on Tuesday, February 15, 2011 at 12:30pm.

7. Other Items?

No items were raised.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:10pm.

Documents distributed at the meeting included:

Meeting Agenda

Draft Minutes from the January 11, 2011 CEDS Strategy Committee meeting

A draft of *The Action Plan for Berkshire County's Economic Future, Goals and Objective* section

A copy of the *Berkshire CEDS Project Priorities - Evaluation/Scoring Framework*

A copy of the *Proposal Description Summary* spreadsheet

A copy of the *Project Proposal Packets* (on CD)

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JAMES MULLEN, Chair
SHEILA IRVIN, Vice-Chair
GALE LABELLE, Clerk
CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

NATHANIEL W. KARNS, A.I.C.P.
Executive Director

**Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee**

*Tuesday, February 15, 2011, 12:30 PM
2nd Floor Conference Room, BRPC Office, 1 Fenn Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201*

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes (January 25, 2011)
3. Public Comments (Non-Agenda Items)
4. 2011 CEDS – Berkshire CEDS Project Priorities
 - a. Regional Criteria Evaluation/Scoring Results
 - b. EDA Criteria Evaluation/Scoring Results
 - c. Ranking Structure
5. 2011 CEDS – Implementation
6. 2011 CEDS – State Cooperation, Consistency and Integration
7. Next Meeting (Tuesday, March 8th, 2011 at 12:30pm)
8. Other Items?
9. Adjournment

City and Town Clerks: Please post this notice pursuant to M.G.L., Chapter 39, Section 23B

In case of inclement weather, please call (413)442-1521 x15 to learn if your meeting is still scheduled.

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**Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee**

Tuesday, February 15, 2011, 12:30 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room, BRPC Office, 1 Fenn Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201

Committee Members

Kristine Hazzard X Roger Bolton AB Heather Boulger AB Kevin O'Donnell AB
Keith Girouard X Mike Nuvalle X Laury Epstein X Mike Supranowicz AB Lauri Klefos X
Michael Hoffman X Christine Ludwiszewski X Eleanore Velez AB Deanna Ruffer X
Ann Dobrowolski (Alt) X Helena Fruscio AB Tim Geller X Robert Wilson AB Brenda Burdick X
Mark Berman X

BRPC Staff

Nathaniel Karns X Thomas Matuszko X Daniel Sexton X Mark Maloy X

Public

Allison Johnson X Andy McKeeven X Joe Scelsi' X

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order

The February 15, 2011 meeting of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) Strategy Committee was convened at 12:35 pm. Mr. Matuszko explained that he would be the moderator for this meeting and that the meeting was being recorded in accordance with the Open Meeting law. Mr. Matuszko then asked if there was anyone present whom wished to record the meeting as well. Seeing none the meeting began.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Matuszko asked for approval of the meeting minutes from the January 25, 2011 meeting of the CEDs Strategy Committee.

Mr. Hoffmann made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Ms. Ludwiszewski. Mr. Matuszko then asked for unanimous consent, seeing no objections the motion passed.

3. Public Comments (Non-Agenda Items)

Mr. Matuszko then explained that this was a public meeting being held by Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. Noticing that there were members of the public present; Mr. Matuszko asked if there was anyone whom wished to speak on any non-agenda items? Seeing none, Mr. Matuszko then moved the discussion to the Project Priorities agenda item.

4. 2011 CEDs – Berkshire CEDs Project Priorities

Mr. Matuszko started by thanking the Committee members for taking the time to complete the evaluation/scoring worksheet. He mentioned that some Committee members had indicated it took longer than expected to complete the worksheet. Understanding the time commitment necessary to complete the worksheet, staff was very happy to have received 14 completed worksheets. Mr. Matuszko then explained to the Committee that the next step was to develop a method or structure for the prioritization of regionally significant projects.

- a. **Regional Criteria Evaluation/Scoring Results**
- b. **EDA Criteria Evaluation/Scoring Results**

To set the stage for the discussion and briefly speak to the manner in which information was present to Committee members in the meeting packet, Mr. Matuszko explained the method staff used to list the project proposals. Pages 1-3 in the handout were a total ranking of the projects by median score. Page 4 called out just the project proposals that ranked “high.” Pages 5-8 are a presentation of high and medium projects by category (the categories included *Education and Workforce Development*, *Physical Projects*, *Physical and Technology Infrastructure*, and *Programs and Initiatives*). All the categories that were used stem from the Evaluation section, specifically the Regional Investment component. That categorization also mirrored the grouping structure used in the *Project Description Summary* document. Pages 9-11 were another representation of the projects grouped by categories; however, the projects that scored low were also shown. Page 12 is a listing of the project proposals that ranked either high or medium during the EDA evaluation process completed by staff. Pages 13-15 are an overall listing of projects assessed under the EDA evaluation process. This list includes projects that scored low.

c. **Ranking Structure**

After the explanation of the results, Mr. Matuszko then reinforced the need to establish a method or structure for the prioritization of regionally significant projects for the CEDS report. He explained that it is staff’s recommendation that projects be identified and listed in the report using the following structure: (1) a listing of just the high ranking projects; (2) a list of the high and medium projects by category; (3) a listing of projects that meet the EDA’s investment priorities; and (4) an appendix listing all of projects considered. Mr. Matuszko then asked the Committee members for input.

The Committee then began to discuss the scoring results and proposed ranking methods. The Committee’s comments made during this discussion included:

- ***A concern surrounding the completeness or lack of information provided for some of the project proposals was raised.*** Staff agreed that there was a great disparity among the submitted project proposals. Mr. Matuszko noted that in hindsight maybe staff should have filtered the proposals. However, it was staff’s and the Committee’s intention to gather a broad spectrum of economic development projects from throughout the region. Mr. Matuszko mentioned that projects lacking information or that weren’t as well developed need to be identified in a certain way for next time. It was suggested that implementation measures could be built in to assist project proponents develop their proposals and to refine the solicitation process.
- ***A difficulty that arose during the evaluation process centered on identifying whether a specific project would or could ever be a reality (i.e. long shot proposals).***
- ***Another difficulty mentioned focused on determining the capacity of a proposal to move forward.***

Mr. Matuszko mentioned that staff expected the evaluation process to be difficult. He talked about the fact that Committee members had to take a leap of faith with many proposals. Staff anticipated project proposals that were really good ideas and represented the most value or potential would rise to the top. From his perspective, Mr. Matuszko felt that the process had worked. He then mentioned again, that it is the Committee’s responsibility to identify a method to prioritize the project proposals and how it should be presented.

There was some additional Committee discussion on the scoring results and proposed ranking methods. The Committee’s comments made during this discussion included:

- ***A Committee member felt the evaluation/scoring criteria was heavily weighted towards planning proposals and not physical development projects.*** Staff then explained that there is a lot of latitude from EDA in how projects or priorities are presented, that’s why staff has recommended that projects be called out or broken up by category. By using this method, projects pursuing funding from a non-EDA source would be listed in the report and utilize those benefits.
- ***It was also mentioned that projects not possessing information that showed a readiness to move forward were not able to receive higher scores.***
- ***There was another concern raised that noted many of the project proposals lacked information regarding funding, whether that be potential or secured.***

- **A Committee member asked for a staff interpretation or overall reaction to the results of the scoring and rankings.** Mr. Matuszko explained that the scoring results were fairly consistent. There weren't any wildly erratic scores. There was a good degree of fairness. There were some surprises as to what projects were identified as high priorities, such as River School Redevelopment, Adaptive Reuse of Mills, Monument Mills Reuse Planning. Projects that represent a high economic value to the region did rank fairly well, such as Greylock Glen, the Life Sciences Center, WiredWest, etc...
- **Another element that was identified as missing in the evaluation criteria was Geographical Dispersion.** Staff explained that there was some geographic dispersal, but that the rankings were a little south county heavy. Mr. Karns also mentioned that he was concerned about the lack of workforce development proposals. However, given the three proposals that were submitted it was a little surprising that the Industry Workforce Pathways proposal was not ranked higher.
- **With the mindset of this being a regional economic document and not just an EDA document, a concern was raised regarding the lack of the following elements education/workforce development piece, a lack of public/private partnerships, and a process for dialog.**
- **The scoring criteria could have been standardized.**
- **Are the projects that were submitted and reviewed a complete list of the regional's important economic projects?**

As a result of the discussion points mentioned above, the Committee then began to discuss how the projects could be prioritized. Mr. Matuszko explained that staff tried to develop a process or mechanism that was as transparent and objective as possible, while keeping in mind the level of information that had been submitted. A Committee member asked for some clarification from staff regarding the EDA priorities. A brief discussion of the EDA's funding priorities and the underserved or distressed areas in the county followed. A Committee member suggested that before a prioritization of projects can happen it should be decided whether this report is intended to be an EDA document or a much broader economic planning document for the region. Mr. Matuszko said, staff has been operating under the impression that the Committee had already decided that the document would be a regional economic planning document.

After discussing the initial evaluation results, the Committee questioned the completeness of some of the information gathered from project proponents and questioned whether certain assessment criteria were underscored or under emphasized. There were six fundamental elements to identifying regionally significant economic projects called out by the Committee members that included:

- Readiness to proceed from a concept or idea to an actual "on the ground" economic development project;
- Availability and current status of other funds that would increase the likelihood of a successful project;
- The necessity of the proposed project as a prerequisite to enable, enhance or allow other economic development projects;
- Potential impacts or unintended consequences from a project that might have long term detrimental effects;
- Geographical dispersion of projects throughout the county; and
- Capacity of those involved with the implementation of the project proponent to actually implement the project.

Mr. Matuszko followed with a discussion of two potential options for moving forward. The first was the initiation of a broader discussion of the project proposals within the context of the six elements above. The second was a solicitation to communities, entities and stakeholder groups throughout the region requesting comments on the initial ranking of the project proposals. A Committee member noted the fact that we had to start somewhere, the Committee set and implemented a process, and that there is time over the next year to adjust and refine the process to address the missing elements.

A Committee member asked how the prioritized project lists would be used going forward, what is the next step? Mr. Matuszko then began to discuss the Implementation section. The complete discussion of this topic is listed below under the 2011 CEDS – Implementation agenda item.

Following the brief conversation of the Implementation section, the meeting discussion transitioned back to the prioritization of project proposals. A Committee member asked why we didn't just prioritize the projects solely in terms of EDA eligibility. Mr. Matuszko explained that although the EDA does not have hard and fast requirements for how the prioritized list should look, the EDA does encourage the presentation of a broader listing of regionally significant projects. A Committee member thought it was very striking to see the regionally high list next to the EDA list, there were major differences. Staff mentioned that if the focus of the CEDS report was to access EDA monies exclusively, there just aren't areas within the county that meet the EDA's qualifier for underserved or economically distressed population areas. Mr. Matuszko identified which communities in the region that meet the EDA's qualifier

for underserved or economically distressed (Pittsfield, North Adams, Adams, Florida, and Hinsdale). Mr. Karns explained that EDA funds have limited application within the county. From his stand point, Mr. Karns suggested that it would be better to identify a relatively small list of projects (say 3-5) that may meet the EDA's criteria. He also mentioned that just listing economic projects within the region is a step in the right direction.

A Committee member raised a question concerning how communities and projects proponents were going to be allowed an opportunity to comment on the listings. Mr. Matuszko explained that there is a 30-day public comments period built into the process. Concerns were voiced as to whether the comment process should be initiated now rather than later, thus making the process as iterative as possible. A suggestion was made to send a solicitation out to all the entities that were ask for projects for proposals, regarding the initial project list. A concern was raised as to whether this would open the door for a flood of input, further diluting the evaluation and prioritization process thus fare. It was then mentioned that the solicitation of support and input is imperative for communities and the overall process, since communities stand to be impacted the most. A Committee member then referenced the need for communities to certify the CEDS report. Mr. Sexton explained that there was no community approval process. He further explained that the EDA only encourages the CEDS report be accompanied by letters of support from communities within the region and the CEDS Strategy Committee's approval of the final document. A Committee member asked where the locust of the project prioritization rests. Mr. Matuszko explained that that is a responsibility of the Committee.

From this discussion, Committee members suggested that a letter be mailed to all project proponents asking for input on the initial listing of regional significant project priorities. It was noted that recipients of this letter should receive the following items: a copy of the evaluation criteria, a copy of the overall ranking of projects, a copy of projects ranked by category and summarization of the project description. Committee members emphasized that this is not a "resubmission."

To bring some organization to the discussion, Mr. Matuszko then asked for input from the Committee as to what they wanted to use the solicited information for. From his perspective, he explained that there are two ways the solicited information could be used, which were: for informational purposes moving forward or the Committee could consider comments and information received to further refine the list of prioritized projects. A Committee member questioned whether there was a capacity or time to complete a second solicitation. It was suggested that maybe this process should be conducted after the reports publishing.

To clarify the suggestion made by the Committee, Mr. Matuszko asked for a motion speaking to the Committee's suggestion.

Ms. Klefos made a motion asking BRPC staff to solicit project proponents for comments regarding the initial prioritized list of projects. The letter should include copies of the information presented on pages 1-8 of the handout (the overall ranking of projects and the projects ranked by category) without scores, a copy of the evaluation criteria, and summarization of the project description. This motion was seconded by Ms. Hazard. Mr. Matuszko then asked for unanimous consent, Ms. Epstein opposed to the motion. Seeing no other objections the motion passed.

To make clear the intent of the informational request, Mr. Karns spoke to the fact that this solicitation should not be seen as a resubmission of project proposals. He also noted that comments should focus on the potential inaccuracies of the listing, speaking to projects that are prerequisite to other projects and to how the list advances overall economic development in the region. Staff will refine the language of the mailing internally. To get a sense of timeline from the Committee, Mr. Matuszko explained that staff would open the solicitation period for about a week and a half. Staff would then try to get copies of the responses to the Committee the Friday before the March 8th meeting. Committee members felt the timeline was acceptable.

Mr. Matuszko then moved the discussion to a continuation of the Implementation agenda item.

5. 2011 CEDS – Implementation

Mr. Matuszko explained that the Implementation section is made up of activities and actions that the Committee identifies as important to focus on over the next 1-5 years. He mentioned that staff is proposing two types of implementation measures including: (1) broad sets of activities that could or should be implemented throughout the region modeled from the CEDS Goals and Objectives, and (2) sets of actions under each goal focusing on projects. The project specific actions could be drawn from the prioritized list project proposals. Mr. Matuszko highlighted a number of concepts mentioned today that could be developed into activities, such as working with project proponents to better develop their concept and developing better evaluation criteria to analyze the impacts of project proposals. He then mentioned, in terms of the prioritized projects, that really projects that ranked the highest should be developed into implementation section.

Mr. Sexton briefly explained to the Committee the methodology staff is proposing for the listing of implementing activities and actions. He mentioned that an obstacle to developing this section was the identification of partnering or sponsoring organizations and the review of their long-range action plans. The identification and gathering of this information is important ensure an organization that does not have the capacity or the willingness to implement a certain activity or action is not listed within the report. Staff is in the process of gathering this information.

Mr. Matuszko asked the Committee whether they felt the framework was headed in the right direct. A committee member felt that there was a column missing from the framework that spoke to "Next Steps." Staff explained that they envisioned the "1st Milestone" column as accomplishing the missing component. Committee members asked that the title of the "1st Milestone" column be changed to "Next Steps." Mr. Sexton asked that further comments be submitted to him as soon as possible by e-mail.

Mr. Matuszko clarified that the Committee was supportive of the proposed framework. The Committee agreed.

6. 2011 CEDS – State Cooperation, Consistency and Integration

Briefly Mr. Matuszko mentioned the proposed language for this section of the report. Mr. Sexton explained that the proposed language is still in flux. This instability is the result of on-going communications between staff and State representatives regarding the future plans for economic planning at the State level.

Mr. Matuszko asked that any comments be sent to Mr. Sexton.

6. Next Meeting (Tuesday, March 8th, 2011 at 12:30pm)

Since the CEDS Strategy Committee was unable to establish a list of regionally significant economic development projects, Mr. Matuszko asked whether members were amenable to adding a second meeting in March. A Committee member asked how the addition of another meeting would affect the overall schedule for the CEDS project. Mr. Matuszko clarified that the project had to be completed by April 30th, 2011, due to a contractual obligation between BRPC and the EDA. After Committee members looked at their calendars, it was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday, March 8th at 12:30pm and that an additional meeting would be scheduled for March 22nd.

7. Other Items?

No items were raised.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20pm.

Documents distributed at the meeting included:

Meeting Agenda

Draft Minutes from the January 25, 2011 CEDS Strategy Committee meeting

A document containing Project Updates for past CEDS priority projects

A copy of the draft language for the *Implementation* section

A copy of the draft language for the *State Cooperation, Consistency and Integration* section

A handout containing the evaluation/scoring results

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CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

NATHANIEL W. KARNIS, A.I.C.P.
Executive Director

**Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee**

*Tuesday, March 8th, 2011, 12:30 PM
2nd Floor Conference Room, BRPC Office, 1 Fenn Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201*

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes (February 15, 2011)
3. Public Comments (Non-Agenda Items)
4. Guest Speaker Matthew Suchodolski, EDA Economic Development Specialist (Tentative)
5. 2011 CEDS – Berkshire CEDS Project Priorities
 - a. Solicitation Results
 - b. Identification of Regionally Significant Projects
6. 2011 CEDS – Implementation
7. Next Meeting (Tuesday, March 22th, 2011 at 12:30pm)
8. Other Items?
9. Adjournment

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In case of inclement weather, please call (413)442-1521 x15 to learn if your meeting is still scheduled.

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**Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee**

Tuesday, March 8, 2011, 12:30 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room, BRPC Office, 1 Fenn Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201

Committee Members

Kristine Hazzard X Roger Bolton X Heather Boulger AB Marya LaRoche X Kevin O'Donnell X
Keith Girouard AB Mike Nuvalie AB Laury Epstein X Mike Supranowicz AB Lauri Klefos X
Michael Hoffman X Christine Ludwiszewski AB Eleanore Velez AB Deanna Ruffer AB
Ann Dobrowolski (Alt) X Helena Fruscio X Tim Geller X Robert Wilson AB Brenda Burdick AB
Mark Berman X

BRPC Staff

Nathaniel Karns X Thomas Matuszko X Daniel Sexton X Mark Maloy X

EDA Representative

Matthew Suchodolski X

Public

Andy McKeever X

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order

At 12:40pm it was determined that there were not enough Committee members present yet (quorum) to hold the March 8, 2011 meeting of the CEDS Strategy Committee.

2. Informational Presentation Matthew Suchodolski, EDA Economic Development Specialist (Tentative)

Since there were not enough Committee members present for a quorum, Mr. Matuszko asked whether Mr. Suchodolski, EDA Economic Development Specialist for Massachusetts, would be willing to give his presentation as an information talk to the Committee members that were present? Mr. Suchodolski agreed. To ensure compliance with Massachusetts Public Meeting laws, Mr. Matuszko explained to all individuals present that Mr. Suchodolski's presentation would be for informational purposes only. He further noted that without a quorum, no actions or motions could be made by the Committee at this time. With that said, Mr. Matuszko handed the floor to Mr. Suchodolski.

Mr. Suchodolski began the presentation by explaining that he is an employee of the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) and is the Economic Development Specialist from Massachusetts. He then noted that he was not present to help, but rather to help partner. He subsequently mentioned that the CEDS process is designed to be "regional;" so in no way, shape or form is he present to tell the Committee or the citizens of Berkshire County

what they should do with this CEDS. The Berkshire CEDS is the economic development plan for the region, not EDA's. The EDA's regulations and guidance provide a framework for entities, like BRPC, to work towards the development of a regional CEDS. A CEDS is an evolving process and document designed to help grow regional economies. Mr. Suchodolski identified that the most important takeaway, from the presentation, should be that CEDS's are regional documents not EDA documents. The CEDS should be focused on helping and growing the economic vitality of the region through job creation, retention and the charting of private investment. During the course of Mr. Suchodolski's presentation, he spoke to the following topics and concepts:

- **Brief history and background of EDA;**
- **Discussed what a CEDS is and how it is supposed to be used;**
 - Creating an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies
 - Integrates a region's human and physical capital planning in the service of economic development
 - Continuing economic development planning process developed with broad-based and diverse public and private sector participation. It must set forth the goals and objectives necessary to solve the economic development problems of the region
 - Benchmark by which a regional economy can evaluate opportunities with other regions in the national economy
- **EDA's role within Massachusetts;**
- **Project priority list requirements and methods for presenting project information within the CEDS report; and**
- **EDA funding/project eligibility.**

Following Mr. Suchodolski's presentation, there were a number of questions asked by individuals in attendance. Those questions included:

- **How does the EDA define "substantial population loss?"** *Mr. Suchodolski explained that the EDA considers the combination of two factors when examining the eligibility criteria: number of citizens lost and time span of loss.*
- **How does the EDA evaluate project applications?** *Mr. Suchodolski explained that project proposals are examined in-house, there is a two-tier evaluation process, and each project is given a ranked/scored against the eligibility criteria (Highly Competitive, Competitive or Not Competitive). He mentioned that it is his job to guide, partner and work with project proponents to make their application as competitive as possible. Under current funding constraints, Mr. Suchodolski explained that his regional office has received approximately \$28-33 million annually (last two-years). In FY'2011, for every \$6 of requests coming in the EDA was able to get \$1 onto projects. In an instance where project proposals meet all the criteria and are determined to be highly competitive, an administrative decision is made allocating funds to specific projects.*

Mr. Matuszko distributed an informational summary of how BRPC staff understood the EDA's funding criteria and eligibility requirements; however, he encouraged everyone present to visit the EDA's webpage for additional information or contact the EDA directly. Mr. Matuszko then thanked Mr. Suchodolski's for providing an informational presentation. He then checked to see whether there was now enough Committee members present to begin the meeting. Seeing eleven Committee members present, Mr. Matuszko called the meeting to order.

3. Call to Order

At 1:35pm on March 8, 2011 a meeting of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Strategy Committee was convened. Mr. Matuszko explained that he would be the moderator for this meeting and that the meeting was being recorded in accordance with the Open Meeting law. Mr. Matuszko then asked if there was anyone present whom wished to record the meeting as well. Seeing none the meeting began.

4. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Matuszko asked for approval of the meeting minutes from the February 15, 2011 meeting of the CEDS Strategy Committee.

Mr. Hoffmann made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Berman. Mr. Matuszko then asked for unanimous consent, seeing no objections the motion passed.

5. Public Comments (Non-Agenda Items)

Mr. Matuszko then explained that this was a public meeting being held by Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. Noticing that there were members of the public present; Mr. Matuszko asked if there was anyone whom wished to speak on any non-agenda items? Seeing none, Mr. Matuszko then moved the discussion to the

Project Priorities agenda item.

6. 2011 CEDS – Berkshire CEDS Project Priorities

Mr. Matuszko started by explaining that at the last meeting, staff had presented the CEDS Strategy Committee with a proposed method to prioritize the project proposals. Following that presentation, Committee members entered into an in-depth conversation focusing on the evaluation criteria and the ranking results. As a result of that discussion, Mr. Matuszko mentioned that staff was asked to solicit comments from project proponents regarding the initial project rankings and to gather additional information about their project, as it pertained to the six fundamental elements.

From that solicitation, Mr. Matuszko explained that a number of project proponents had decided to respond. Those responses were distributed to all Committee members last Friday for review and a copy of the responses has been made available as a handout at this meeting. He then briefly mentioned the proponents (City of Pittsfield, City of North Adams, Berkshire Creative and Berkshire Chamber of Commerce) and projects for which comments were submitted that requested changes to the project listing. He also noted comments received for a couple of projects that generally supported their project listing.

Mr. Matuszko then explained to Committee members that the focus of this meeting was to establish a method for listing and prioritized projects. Before discussing staff's proposed method for listing and prioritizing projects, Mr. Matuszko inquired as to whether any Committee members had comments pertaining to where the discussion left off at the last meeting or more importantly how to proceed with the listing of projects? From the information presented by Mr. Suchodolski, Mr. Matuszko was struck by the great deal of leeway EDA allows for the listing of projects within the CEDS report. A Committee member then mentioned that it seems as though the EDA gives more emphasis to the "projects" listed in the CEDS report, as opposed to how the projects are listed. Mr. Matuszko followed the commented with a clarification of the benefits to completing a CEDS, which included: the development of an economic blueprint for the region and a mechanism to allow organizations and project proponents to access EDA funds. Mr. Matuszko then mentioned an unintended consequence that staff had realized regarding the impacts of project listing on the ability to pursue funding from other sources. Another Committee member mentioned that they were taken back by the quality and quantity of information submitted within project applications. Due to this lack of information the evaluations/scoring process was very difficult. It was suggested, by a Committee member that maybe projects should simple be listed alphabetically, as opposed to prioritizing them. Mr. Matuszko deferred to Mr. Suchodolski for direction. Mr. Suchodolski referenced the guidance that had been shown during his presentation, which highlighted the fact that the listing of projects must be prioritized in one way, shape or form. Mr. Matuszko clarified that an alphabetized list of projects would not work.

A Committee member then suggested that an examination of the median scores may result in the identification of gaps or natural breaks. From these breaks, there is the possibility that projects could be divided and grouped to a greater detail. Mr. Matuszko explained that that was similar to staff's initial concept of breaking the projects up into high, medium and low groupings based on the median scores. The Committee member concurred with staff's statement, however, explained further that the projects could be divided into smaller groups. Other Committee members agreed, however, there were suggestions that the more detailed groupings of projects should be aggregated by sub-region, community or category. From this discussion, Committee members asked for staff's recommendation.

Mr. Matuszko explained that staff's grouping or categorizing of projects was a combination of three methods. The proposed methods took into consideration the initial scoring results of the CEDS Strategy Committee and the additional comments submitted by project proponents, as well as staff's general knowledge of project proposals and their interconnections with one another. The three methods proposed by staff included:

1. **Listing project proposals that were identified as "Game Changers" or "Regionally Significant Projects list" individually or by way of grouping proposals together.** *(It was noted, by staff, these projects or groupings of projects were seen as impacting the entire county).*
2. **Listing the remaining projects by category** *(i.e. Education and Workforce Development, Physical Projects, Physical and Technology Infrastructure, and Programs and Initiatives).*
3. **Listing of projects within the "Physical Projects" category by sub-region.** *(The sub-regions would include North, Central and south.).*

Knowing that the "Physical Projects" category list produced much discussion at the last meeting, Mr. Matuszko spoke to the methodology behind listing projects that have direct impacts to communities in specific areas (sub-regions). Projects in the northern portion of the county don't have direct impacts to the County's central or southern communities. Mr. Karns also noted that this was the methodology used in the economic planning document of the 1990's, the precursor to the 2001 CEDS. This categorization recognizes that there are sub-regions within the

county, predominantly due to geography. A handout, explaining staff's proposed listing method, was distributed at this point in the meeting. To ensure Committee members better understood the concepts proposed by staff, Mr. Matuszko urged Committee members not to jump ahead in the handout. Page 1 of the handout, provided a listing of the projects that have the greatest potential for regional impacts. Mr. Matuszko went project by project discussing the projects or groups of projects listed on the page. He also explained that many of these projects were prerequisites or directly affected economic development activities or projects throughout the county. Mr. Karns noted that many of the regional projects were identified in the *Regional Evaluation* section as weaknesses or threats in the region. Staff noted that many of the projects listed in this category received high scores during the evaluation.

Comments raised regarding staff's proposed listing methods included:

- **Why were all the projects grouped under the Regional Highway Access Improvements proposal, which ranked low were ranked low and still made it to the list?** *Mr. Matuszko explained that all the projects in this group were identified as prerequisites to other regional developments and are listed in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP); therefore, staff recommended they should be identified as region-wide projects.*
- **Another comment pertained to the grouping of projects and why more projects were not grouped initially (i.e. Hubbard Avenue with the Ashuelot Park and Schnopps-Roberts sites)?** *Mr. Matuszko explained that the grouping of proposals in the regional projects was intended to do just that, group projects. In the instance of Hubbard Avenue, staff determined it was a project that impacted the central portion of the county rather than the whole county. He also mentioned that other projects could be grouped together.*

Hearing the Committee's comments, Mr. Matuszko then began to discuss in greater detail the second listing method, categories. Before moving the discussion forward, he mentioned that the first method of listing projects was intended to identify a relatively short list of projects, all of which had a true regional impact. To clarify the information presented by staff, a Committee member asked whether every project regardless of ranking was going to be listed in the report. Staff explained that a listing of all the projects would be provided in an appendix. Only projects that ranked as "high," "medium" or that were authorized to be listed by the Committee would be discussed in greater detail in the report. These projects would also represent the Project Priorities List.

To ensure that staff was headed in the right direction with the proposed listing methods; Mr. Matuszko asked whether Committee members were generally supportive of the method? Committee members concurred.

At this point in the meeting the digital recorder stopped working. Therefore, there are no recorded records of the meeting minutes beyond this point. Information and discussions presented below are from the memories and hand written records of BRPC staff.

The CEDS Strategy Committee concurred with staff's suggested methods for listing project priorities; however, there were specific projects that Committee members wanted to discuss. Mr. Matuszko asked the Committee whether they had interest in going through the Regionally Significant projects one-by-one and then projects with a "Low" ranking. Committee members approved of this structure for finalizing the project priority list. In instances where there were concerns surrounding the listing or location of a project proposal a motion was requested by staff to establish the placement of the project proposal. With that said, Mr. Matuszko began to discussing the project proposals.

Discussion and motions are listed below by project or project group:

- **Regional Telecommunications Network:** *There were no concerns regarding this project proposal.*
- **Pittsfield Municipal Airport:** *A Committee member asked staff to provide an explanation of the regional economic impacts stemming from the airport improvements. Mr. Karns explained that the airport's clientele primarily consisted of corporate jets and regional connector flights. He then mentioned that many of the region's businesses and companies utilize the airport to transport clients and employees. Without the improvements, people would either have to travel to Albany, NY or Hartford, CT. Although there is another airport located in North Adams, this airport lacks similar safety upgrades to handle larger corporate jets. Mr. Matuszko asked the Committee for a motion.*

Ms. LaRoche made a motion recommending that the Pittsfield Municipal Airport Improvement project be kept as a Regionally Significant Project. This motion was seconded by Ms. Fruscio. Mr. Matuszko then

asked for unanimous consent, Ms. Epstein opposed to the motion. Seeing no other objections the motion passed.

- **Regional Highway Access Improvements:** *While the Committee had no problems with including a project grouping of regional highway improvements, there were concerns surrounding the inclusion of “low” ranked projects. The Committee asked staff to explain how the project grouping was determined and why “low” ranking projects had been included on this list. Based on input received during the project comment period, staff explained that there were a number of project proposals that had been identified to have regional implications. Mr. Matuszko explained that without completing the list of regional highway improvements economic growth specifically that of manufacturing and warehousing would be inhibited. While many of the projects listed in this group were ranked as a “low” priority, many of them were prerequisites for other projects to be implemented.*

Ms. Klefos made a motion to add a project proposal that just spoke to regional improvements.

Following this motion, Committee members discussed whether to include a list of project proposals within the broader proposal for Regional Highway Access Improvements. Staff provided Committee members with a more detailed explanation of the regional impacts for each of the projects listed under the broader project grouping. Mr. Matuszko asked Ms. Klefos whether she wished to modify her motion.

Based on the Committee’s discussion, Ms. Klefos decided to withdraw her motion.

Mr. Bolton made a subsequent motion that recommended the project grouping entitled “Regional Highway Access Improvements” be kept and that the projects listed under this grouping be limited to this regional highway improvement projects listed in the Regional Transportation Plan. The motion was seconded by Ms. Fruscio. Mr. Matuszko then asked for unanimous consent, seeing no objections the motion passed.

- **Berkshire Creative Initiative:** *While most of the projects listed under the “Berkshire Creative Initiative” grouping were ranked either high or medium, Committee members questioned the inclusion of the “Creative Education Initiative” and “Berkshire Festival” projects in the listing. Mr. Matuszko explained that while all the Berkshire Creative project proposals were ranked individually, they had been submitted as a bundle. Staff decided to separate the proposals because each project had been submitted with its own solicitation form and could be implemented independently of other projects. A number of Committee members began discussing whether the projects belonged as a regional project grouping. As the project proponents for these projects, Ms. Fruscio explained that all of the projects proposed are envisioned to be regional in nature and not focused on one community or sub-region.*

Mr. Hoffmann made a motion to move the Berkshire Creative Initiatives project grouping out of the Regionally Significant Project listing to the appropriate project category listing and to keep the two “low” ranked projects in the listing. This motion was seconded by Ms. Klefos. Mr. Matuszko then asked for unanimous consent, seeing no objections the motion passed.

- **Alternative Energy and Energy Infrastructure Improvements:** *There were no concerns regarding this project proposal.*

With the review of the Regionally Significant Projects listing complete, Mr. Matuszko asked the Committee whether there were any projects missing from this list. A number of Committee members suggested that the Passenger Rail project proposal be added to the list regionally significant list. Mr. Matuszko asked if there was additional discussion on the suggestion or whether there was a motion for the recommendation.

Ms. Klefos made a motion to include a Regional Passenger Rail project grouping, including the Passenger Rail CT to Pittsfield and East to West Passenger Rail Enhancements projects, to the Regional Significant Project listing. The motion was seconded by Mr. Geller. Mr. Matuszko then asked for unanimous consent, Mr. Bolton objected the motion. Seeing no other objections the motion passed.

Mr. Matuszko asked whether there was any further discussion on this list or if other projects needed to be added to the regionally significant list? Seeing none, Mr. Matuszko then transitioned the discussion to the “low” ranked projects. A Committee member suggested that the “Hubbard Avenue Improvements” proposal be move up into a category listing. During discussion on this suggestion, a Committee member recommended that a project grouping be created including the Hubbard Avenue Improvements, Ashuelot Park Development and the Schnopps-Roberts Site projects. Mr. Matuszko asked for a motion.

Ms. LaRoche made a motion to create a project grouping of the Hubbard Avenue Improvements, Ashuelot Park Development and the Schnopps-Roberts Site projects, and to move this grouping to the Physical Development category under the Central Sub-Region. This motion was seconded by Mr. Hoffmann. Mr. Matuszko asked for unanimous consent, seeing no objections the motion passed.

Mr. Matuszko then asked whether there were any other projects that the Committee wished to have moved up into a category listing. Seeing none, Mr. Matuszko acknowledged that the meeting was over its allotted time and suggested that discussion on the Implementation agenda item be continued to the next meeting. Committee members agreed.

7. 2011 CEDS – Implementation

Due to a lack of time this item was not discussed at this meeting.

8. Next Meeting (Tuesday, March 22th, 2011 at 12:30pm)

The Committee agreed to hold the next CEDS Strategy Committee meeting on Tuesday, March 22, 2011 at 12:30pm.

7. Other Items?

No items were raised.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10pm.

Documents distributed at the meeting included:

- Meeting Agenda
- Draft Minutes from the February 15, 2011 CEDS Strategy Committee meeting
- A Project Comments Packet, containing responses that were submitted by project proponents during the project comment period.
- A handout containing staff's proposed methods of listing priority projects.
- A handout containing staff's understanding of the EDA's funding criteria and eligibility requirements.

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**Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee**

*Tuesday, March 22nd, 2011, 12:30 PM
2nd Floor Conference Room, BRPC Office, 1 Fenn Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201*

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes (Tuesday, March 8th, 2011)
3. Public Comments (Non-Agenda Items)
4. 2011 CEDS – Berkshire CEDS Project Priority Lists ----- **Action Item**
5. 2011 CEDS – Implementation
6. 2011 CEDS – Performance Measures
7. Next Meeting (Tuesday, April 12th, 2011)
8. Other Items?
9. Adjournment

City and Town Clerks: Please post this notice pursuant to M.G.L., Chapter 39, Section 23B

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**Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee**

Tuesday, March 22, 2011, 12:30 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room, BRPC Office, 1 Fenn Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201

Committee Members

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Keith Girouard X Mike Nuwallie X Laury Epstein AB Mike Supranowicz X Lauri Klefos AB
Michael Hoffman X Christine Ludwiszewski X Eleanore Velez X Deanna Ruffer AB
Ann Dobrowolski (Alt) X Helena Fruscio AB Tim Geller X Robert Wilson X Brenda Burdick X
Mark Berman X

BRPC Staff

Nathaniel Karns X Thomas Matuszko X Daniel Sexton X Mark Maloy X

Public

Allison Johnson X Joe Scelsi X

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order

At 12:40pm on March 22, 2011 a meeting of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) Strategy Committee was convened. Mr. Matuszko explained that he would be the moderator for this meeting and that the meeting was being recorded in accordance with the Open Meeting law. Mr. Matuszko then asked if there was anyone present whom wished to record the meeting as well. Seeing none the meeting began.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Matuszko asked for approval of the meeting minutes from the March 8, 2011 meeting of the CEDs Strategy Committee.

Mr. Girouard made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Ms. Dobrowolski. Mr. Matuszko then asked for unanimous consent, seeing no objections the motion passed.

3. Public Comments (Non-Agenda Items)

Mr. Matuszko then explained that this was a public meeting being held by Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. Noticing that there were members of the public present; Mr. Matuszko asked if there was anyone whom wished to speak on any non-agenda items? Seeing none, Mr. Matuszko then moved the discussion to the next agenda item.

4. 2011 CEDS – Berkshire CEDS Project Priorities

Mr. Matuszko started by explaining that at the last meeting, staff had presented the CEDS Strategy Committee with a proposed method for listing and prioritizing the project proposals. Per the discussions at that meeting, a number of changes were suggested by the Committee regarding the proposed list. The results of those modifications are represented in the revised Project Priority List before the Committee. Seeing that there were a number of Committee members present that weren't at the last meeting, Mr. Matuszko briefly discussed the changes. He began by discussing the "Projects Representing the Greatest Needs Regionally" list. It was noted that the title of this list was changed to better reflect the Economic Development Administration's requirements. At the request of the Committee, staff re-evaluated the projects in the Regional Transportation Plan to determine if there were any regional projects that needed to be incorporated into the Regional *Highway Access Improvements* project grouping. Per this review, it was identified that there were an additional three projects that should be added to this grouping, including: Route 8/Friends Street Intersection project (Town of Adams), Route 7/20 Corridor Access Management Improvements project, and Route 20 Traffic Improvements. Mr. Matuszko asked the Committee if there were any comments/concerns pertaining to this grouping. Seeing none, he transitioned the discussion to the categorized project lists.

Under the "Projects that Enhance the Region – Physical Development Category" list, Mr. Matuszko explained the following changes:

- **The grouping of the Gravel Bank, North Adams plaza and Old Route 8 Corridor projects into a project grouping entitled Route 8 Corridor Redevelopment.** Staff explained that the decision to group these projects was based on input received from the project proponent and discussion at the last Committee meeting. A Committee member questioned the title of the grouping; it was thought that the title may give readers the impression that this was a roadway project. Mr. Karns explained that while the project was not specifically a roadway improvement project, the projects in this group were all located along the Route 8 corridor. Mr. Matuszko also mentioned that while the Old Route 8 Corridor project did include the redevelopment of a small section of roadway, the overarching intent was to open up adjacent lands from redevelopment. *It was decided, by the Committee, that the name would remain unchanged.*
- **The grouping of the Ashuelot Park Development, Hubbard Avenue Improvements and the Schnopps-Robert projects into a project grouping entitled Hubbard Avenue Development Area.** Mr. Matuszko explained that these projects are interconnected, in that if the Hubbard Avenue was not improved there are capacity issues that could make full build-out the Ashuelot Park, Schnopps-Robert Site, or other parcels difficult. The Committee, at the last meeting, identified the Hubbard Avenue project as a prerequisite to the development of the surrounding area.
- **A Committee member asked for clarification as to whether a project could appear on two different lists.** Mr. Matuszko explained that that couldn't happen. He did clarify though that the "Berkshire Creative Initiative" is present on multiple category lists, but this is possible because the Berkshire Creative Initiative contains projects in different categories. Staff explained that each project would have a project summary in the Project Priority List section of the CEDS report. Committee members were briefly shown the project summary framework.
- **A Committee member was concerned about placing roadway improvements on the "Projects Representing the Greatest Needs Regionally" list when the project seemed to be more locally based.** Mr. Matuszko explained that while a roadway improvement project may seem to only address a local issue, the decision to identify this as a regional project was based on the broader impacts. If this project was combined with other roadway improvements regional, the results would greatly improve region's overall highway access and circulation.

Seeing that much of the comments expressed by Committee members revolved around specific project information, Mr. Matuszko transitioned the discussion to the Project Narratives. Mr. Matuszko explained that for each project a narrative would be developed to explain the project. The narrative would include information such as Project Name, Project Location, Project Summary, Funding Sources and Job Creation. He explained in greater detail that the Economic Development Administration really wanted to see information pertaining to funding and job creation, essentially speaking to the amount of investment each project would generate.

A Committee member asked whether it was possible to add an element speaking to the "Linkages" of each project. It was explained that this linkage information may help identify leveraging and the localized dynamics of each project. Through a further discussion, by the Committee, it was suggested that the additional field be labeled "Related Linkages" or something similar. A Committee member offered that each project should be able to stand alone and cautioned that through the linkages discussion a project does not become tied to another project. Mr.

Matuszko asked whether Committee members supported the proposed change to the narrative structure, no objections were raised.

Mr. Matuszko then transitioned the discussion back to the changes made to the project category lists. Mr. Matuszko asked if there were any further comments regarding the “Projects that Enhance the Region – Physical Development Category” list? The Committee Speaking specifically to a couple projects in the South Sub-Region list, a Committee member noted that a number of those properties were about to change hands. With this in mind, the Committee member asked whether property owners needed to consent to the list of their property. Staff explained that the listing of projects was not legally binding. As a practical matter, staff explained that contact with project proponents will be ongoing and during the annual Status Reports the project narratives will be updated to reflect project changes and support.

A Committee member questioned the placement and location (in the Central Sub-Region) of the Berkshire Mall/Civic Center/hotel project. Seeing that the project proponent was present at the meeting, Mr. Matuszko invited him to speak on the question. Mr. Scelsi explained that there is no civic center currently in Berkshire County. He also explained that the location is not set, but initial thought focused on the availability of the new access road and a surplus of parking. He also mentioned that the project is regional focused and the intent is to expand the customer base of the region by drawing from new client pools. Mr. Matuszko then noted that the merits of each project have not been evaluated. To this point, individuals assessed the merits of each project through their scoring of the project proposals. He then explained that the Committee could initiate that discussion; however, he cautioned that such an evaluation should be done to all projects not just one. To clarify the discussion of the civic center, Mr. Karns noted that there is not a facility of the appropriate size in the region that is capable of handling a large convention (i.e. Boat Show, Tournaments, etc). Following further discussion, the Committee determined to leave the project on the list. Mr. Scelsi also mentioned that there needs to be a regional shift from communities competing for businesses that already reside in Berkshire County to attracting new business. He mentioned further that with each new business comes new jobs and that is a benefit for the whole county.

Mr. Matuszko shifted the discussion back to the project category lists. Mr. Matuszko briefly highlighted the changes that were made to the Project that Enhance the Region – Physical and Technology Infrastructure Category, the Program and Initiative Category, and the Education and Workforce Development Category. Following this explanation, Mr. Matuszko asked for any questions on the category lists? A committee member asked whether a project could be added speaking to agricultural. It was further explained that agriculture has been emphasized throughout this process as an important regional element. Within all the proposed lists there is only one project listed that speaks to agriculture. Not disagreeing with the Committee member, Mr. Matuszko explained that the adding of projects, especially those without proponents, is a larger question. He asked, “If the Committee was to add a project for agriculture, why not for other areas?” Mr. Matuszko suggested that it may be better to incorporate this question into the Implementation section. In many ways, the priority projects are just a small component of a larger document. Committee members concurred, in that through the Implementation Section the Committee could identify and develop solutions for identified gaps in the project solicitations and listings.

A Committee member reinforced the importance of incorporating an action step emphasizing the importance of re-evaluating the project priority lists. This mechanism will provide some amount of reassurance to project proponents that this process is ongoing and that within a year there will be another chance to have a project listed.

To ensure the Committee was in agreement that the project lists should not be re-opened for unsolicited projects; Mr. Matuszko asked the question to the Committee. The Committee concurred.

Mr. Matuszko then transferred the floor to a Committee member that had a question regarding the overall structure of the list. That Committee member’s question focused on whether one comprehensive listing of all the projects, with high and medium rankings, should be added in addition to the categorized list. According to the Committee member, it was felt that an overall comprehensive list would better show what types of projects were really regionally significant. Another Committee member asked what the project appendix was going to include and whether this appendix could accommodate a comprehensive list of projects. Staff clarified that the appendix, as proposed, would include the listing of the other projects not included in a prioritized list. Staff also cautioned against the use of multiple lists because it was thought that two lists may be confusing and in certain instances it could be harmful to “low” projects. A Committee member asked why the projects couldn’t just be listed alphabetically. Staff explained that at the last meeting the EDA representative had said that listing of projects alphabetically was not acceptable. It was also mentioned, by a Committee member, that pitting one project against another was not a good idea.

Based on the concerns raised during this discuss, Mr. Matuszko tried to explain why and how the current project prioritization structure was developed. The “Projects Representing the Greatest Needs Regionally” listed projects are the truly regionally significant projects. The projects listed in the “Project that Enhance the Region” categories may have regional impacts; however, because they are fundamentally different it wasn’t possible to rank them

against one another (i.e. a physical proposal compared to a workforce training proposal). That is why the decision was made to list projects by categories. In the instance of the Physical Development category, specifically, the projects were further clustered because the impacts and benefits were truly sub-regional. Staff reinforced that it was an intentional and conscious decision to move away from the comprehensive list. To ensure the meeting progressed, Mr. Matuszko asked the Committee whether there was a motion to change the listing structure. Seeing that no motion and hearing much discussion on the lists, Mr. Matuszko asked the Committee for a motion to approve the Project Priority List as presented.

Mr. Girouard made a motion to approve the revised Project priority List as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wilson. Mr. Matuszko then asked for unanimous consent, Mr. Geller opposed the motion. Seeing no other objections the motion passed.

Before moving to the next agenda item, Mr. Matuszko thanked the Committee for all their input and noted that the comments regarding the project narratives will be incorporated. He then inquired as to whether there were any additional comments. A Committee member made a cautionary note that highlighted the fact that some projects, during their development, will create unforeseen impacts or consequences. With that in mind, it was suggested that the Committee consider adding some language or a disclaimer. Another Committee member stated that the “project Priority Lists” are the CEDS selling sheet and that it would be inappropriate to incorporate a disclaimer here. Mr. Sexton mentioned that many of these projects are not static. They are in varying stages of development and as they develop there is a high likely hood that they may change.

It was also suggested, by a Committee member, that timeframe information be added to the project narrative. Mr. Matuszko said that was a good recommendation, since staff was examining how they were going to track the status of projects for the Status Reports annually.

The meeting discussion was then shifted to the Implementation agenda item.

5. 2011 CEDS – Implementation

To start the discussion of this agenda item, Mr. Sexton briefly explained to the Committee how the structure of the information presented in this section was developed. He noted that the input from the Committee at previous meetings, specifically the changing of the column titles, had been incorporated. A Committee member asked whether the “Target Completion” column will or could correlate to the timeframe information being incorporated into the Project Priority List section? It was suggested that this information could be helpful for the reader. Staff noted that this suggestion could easily be integrated. Mr. Sexton then explained that the “Regional Based Activities” were generated from strategic information gathered from other organizations (i.e. Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Berkshire Community College, Berkshire County Regional Employment Board and others). The activities that have been incorporated, in the proposed Implementation section, were selected by staff on the bases of their correlation or consistent with the CEDS Goals and Objectives.

Mr. Sexton then posed a question to the Committee regarding whether all the priority projects should be listed in the Implementation section? A Committee member mentioned that it may be seen as a red flag if a prioritized project is not included in the Implementation section. Mr. Matuszko clarified that the Committee was supportive of incorporating the prioritized projects as action items? The Committee agreed.

Mr. Sexton asked the Committee how they preferred to review the proposed Implementing actions. Knowing that the discussion may take a while, Mr. Matuszko inquired as to each member’s ability to stay longer then the allotted 2-hour timeframe. It was suggested, by a Committee member, that because the Project Based Actions were not integrated and the Project Narrative were not complete that discussion on this section be postponed until those elements are completed.

To ensure staff was on the right track for the proposed Implementation language, Mr. Matuszko asked Committee members for their first impressions of the proposed language. The comments and concerns raised by Committee members included:

- **Clarification was requested regarding listed organizations and their involvement, specifically in the context of their relationships to each, spheres of responsibility and so forth.**
- **It was suggested that the word “entity,” in the first Regional Activity under Goal 1, be changed to “unified approach.”**
- **A concern was raised regarding the establishment of an Economic Development District.** Seeing there was confusion surrounding the establishment of an Economic Development District (EDD), Mr. Matuszko identified that staff would provide the Committee with information regarding the EDD at the next meeting.
- **It was asked whether one Board or Commission could oversee multiple efforts.**

- **Will or is Berkshire Benchmark linked to Massachusetts Benchmarks?**

To help address these concerns, staff will initiate additional conversations with all the economic development related organization in the county to ensure that there is cooperation, support and understanding for the CEDS report and its implementation strategies. Mr. Karns did encourage Committee members to submit their comments to staff to alleviate lower level concerns and discussion at the next meeting.

Seeing disinterest among the Committee to continue the meeting past the two hour limit, Mr. Matuszko jumped ahead to a discussion of the next meeting. A discussion of scheduling can be found below in the Next Meeting section.

6. 2011 CEDS – Performance Measures

Mr. Sexton began by briefly explaining to the Committee what the Performance Measures were intended to accomplish and how the language was generated. He noted that following the release of the draft language to the Committee a couple changes had been made. Those changes were the result of additional discussions among staff and included the elimination of proposed measures 4 and 5. Mr. Sexton then noted that a number of the proposed measures are required by EDA regulations, specifically measures 1, 2 and 7. The remaining measures were developed, by staff, to track information that the EDA is interested in and to highlight elements raised in other economic planning documents developed specifically for Berkshire County. Those measures included the tracking of business start-ups as they relate to clustering industries and the collaborative and partnership efforts that have been initiated, maintained or expanded. A couple comments raised by the Committee included:

- **A measure should be added speaking to how has data gathering can be improved?**
- **It was suggested that measure 7 be expanded to include specific data characteristics that will be tracked such as demographic, economic, social and the others.**

To clarify that staff was on track with the proposed language, Mr. Matuszko asked Committee members whether they felt the language was acceptable. The Committee agreed, keeping in mind the comments that were just raised.

Mr. Matuszko then asked the Committee for any additional comments or questions. A Committee member inquired as to how the sourcing of data is planned to be handled throughout the report? Mr. Sexton explained that every piece of data incorporated into the report has been sourced. He then mentioned that there was not a requirement from EDA to list all the sources that were used within the report.

7. Next Meeting (Tuesday, April 12th, 2011 at 12:30pm)

Mr. Matuszko explained that the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 12th. At this meeting staff would be looking for an endorsement from the Committee on the full report and to allow the opening of the 30-day public comment period. Knowing that there may be changes or edits that arise at this meeting, staff allotted a couple days to address revisions to the document and then distribute it for public comment on Friday, April 15th. Mr. Matuszko then mentioned that staff is expecting some comments to be submitted during the comment period. Staff will conduct an initial filtering of these comments. To address much larger concerns and to gain endorsement of the final document, staff is suggesting that another meeting be scheduled for Tuesday, May 17th. Before the document can be submitted to the EDA, staff will be presenting the full report to the BRPC Commission on Thursday, May 19th. Once the report has been approved by the Commission it will be transmitted to the EDA for approval.

To clarify why the approval process has been extended beyond April 30th, Mr. Matuszko explained that BRPC had secured an extension from EDA to complete the report by June 30th.

To ensure there was consensus for the revised schedule, Mr. Matuszko asked Committee members if there were any concerns or comments. The Committee agreed that the revised schedule looked acceptable. With that said the next CEDS Strategy Committee meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, April 12th, 2011 at 12:30pm.

The discussion was then transitioned to the Performance Measures agenda item

8. Other Items?

No items were raised.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30pm.

Documents distributed at the meeting included:

- Meeting Agenda
- Draft Minutes from the March 8th, 2011 CEDS Strategy Committee meeting
- A copy of the revised Project Priority Lists
- A copy of the draft Implementation section
- A copy of the draft Performance Measures section

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Executive Director

**Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee**

*Tuesday, April 12th, 2011, 12:30 PM
2nd Floor Conference Room, BRPC Office, 1 Fenn Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201*

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes (Tuesday, March 22nd, 2011)
3. Public Comments (Non-Agenda Items)
4. 2011 CEDS – Implementation ----- **Action Item**
 - Economic Development District
 - Massachusetts Benchmarks
5. CEDS Endorsement of 30-day Public Notice ----- **Action Item**
6. Next Meeting (Tuesday, May 17th, 2011)
7. Other Items?
8. Adjournment

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In case of inclement weather, please call (413)442-1521 x15 to learn if your meeting is still scheduled.

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**Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee**

Tuesday, April 12, 2011, 12:30 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room, BRPC Office, 1 Fenn Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201

Committee Members

Kristine Hazzard X Roger Bolton X Heather Boulger AB Marya LaRoche (Alt) X Kevin O'Donnell X
Keith Girouard X Mike Nuvalle X Laury Epstein AB Mike Supranowicz X Lauri Klefos X
Michael Hoffman X Christine Ludwiszewski X Eleanore Velez X Deanna Ruffer X
Ann Dobrowolski (Alt) X Helena Fruscio X Tim Geller AB Robert Wilson X Brenda Burdick AB
Mark Berman AB

BRPC Staff

Nathaniel Karns X Thomas Matuszko X Daniel Sexton X Mark Maloy X

Public

Allison Johnson X Joe Scelsi X Andrew McKeeves X

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order

At 12:35 PM on April 12, 2011 a meeting of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Strategy Committee was convened. Mr. Matuszko explained that he would be the moderator for this meeting and that the meeting was being recorded in accordance with the Open Meeting law. Mr. Matuszko then asked if there was anyone present whom wished to record the meeting as well. Seeing none the meeting began.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Matuszko asked for approval of the meeting minutes from the March 8, 2011 meeting of the CEDS Strategy Committee.

Ms. Dobrowolski made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Ms. Fruscio. Mr. Matuszko then asked for unanimous consent, Mr. O'Donnell abstained, seeing no objections the motion passed.

3. Public Comments (Non-Agenda Items)

Mr. Matuszko then explained that this was a public meeting being held by Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. Noticing that there were members of the public present; Mr. Matuszko asked if there was anyone whom wished to speak on any non-agenda items? Seeing none, Mr. Matuszko then moved the discussion to the next agenda item.

4. 2011 CEDS – Implementation

- **Economic Development District**
- **Massachusetts Benchmarks**

To start the discussion, Mr. Matuszko explained that the Implementation Section represents the meat of the report and a structure for the implementation of the CEDS. He mentioned that staff hoped to review each of the proposed implementation measures to ensure the language as presented is correct and to verify that no items have been missed. Before Mr. Matuszko transitioned the discussion to Mr. Sexton, he asked the Committee whether there were any broad observations that Committee members wished to make about the proposed language. At this point in the discussion, no comments or issues were raised by Committee members.

Mr. Sexton then briefly explained to the Committee how staff arrived at the revised implementation language. Specifically, he noted that input from the Committee had been incorporated, information obtained from project proponents had been updated (Status and Next Steps) and the priority projects had been incorporated as “Project Based Actions.” Before beginning the review, Mr. Sexton briefly mentioned some of the key aspects of the implementation tables. Mr. Sexton then began to discuss each of the implementation measures, line-by-line.

The comments and concerns raised by Committee members, regarding the implementation measures, included:

- **A Committee member suggested the word “Coalition” could be eliminated from the first two measures.** Staff explained that the word “coalition” could be easily removed without altering the title’s intent.

Since there were questions raised at the last meeting, regarding an Economic Development District (EDD), Mr. Sexton provided the Committee with a short explanation of district designation. He specifically discussed the benefits an EDD may generate for the region (access to Planning Partnership grant funds), as well as touched on general EDD information (7 designated districts in Massachusetts). To clarify how an EDD is designated, he discussed the Economic Development Administration’s requirements as provided in Section 304.1 *Designation of Economic Development Districts: Regional Eligibility* of Chapter III in Title 13. A Committee member asked, “Who at the State needed to sign-off on the CEDS to meet the EDD designation criteria?” Mr. Sexton said that staff is currently researching this requirement. Another Committee member questioned how an EDD would be funded. Mr. Sexton explained that some districts are partially funded through the Planning Partnership grant funds, a 50/50 match grant program. Mr. Matuszko explained that the EDD information was meant to inform the Committee. As any project or implementation measure progresses the aspects and elements of that project or program would be fully developed.

Another proposed implementation measure that raised a question at the last meeting was the “Berkshire Benchmarks” proposal. A Committee member had previously asked whether this measure would incorporate information from MassBenchmarks. Mr. Maloy provided the Committee with background information pertaining to the Berkshire Benchmarks and MassBenchmarks data clearing houses. He also mentioned that the Berkshire Benchmarks gathers data from a variety of sources, at county and community levels, making it accessible via the internet and developed some indicators related to the data. A difference of the two data clearing houses is that MassBenchmarks focuses primarily on economic data, whereas Berkshire Benchmarks covers a variety of data sets. Mr. Sexton asked whether there were any questions regarding this implementation measure? Seeing none he transitioned back to a line-by-line discussion of the proposed implementation measures.

The comments and concerns raised by Committee members, regarding the implementation measures, included:

- **It was identified that the “Pittsfield Economic Development Authority” (PEDA) should be removed from the Business Development Assistance proposal.** A Committee member clarified that PEDA is a property owner and was not authorized to provide business assistance services. Staff indicated that the edit would be made.
- **The “Small Business Development Center” should be re-worded to read “Massachusetts Small Business Development Center Network.”** It was explained, by a Committee member, this change was suggested to reflect the full range of resources that were accessible to the Massachusetts Small Business Development Center Network at the national, state and college levels. Staff indicated that the change would be made.
- **It was mentioned that the Commonwealth’s Division of Career Services is implementing the LAZER program, which could fit under Business Development Assistance measure.** A Committee member clarified that this program is meant to gather and make accessible industry sector data.

- **A committee asked for clarification regarding how the “Regional Activities” were developed?** *Mr. Sexton explained that based on the goals and objectives, established by the Committee, staff identified existing programs and initiatives being undertaken by other organizations that were in line with the intent of the goals and objectives. In those instances where a program or initiative wasn’t in place, staff worked with organizations to develop a program that would fulfill the goal or objective.*
- **It was identified that “Pittsfield Economic Development Corporation,” in the Facilitate Access to Loan Programs implementation proposal, should be changed to “Pittsfield Economic Development Authority.”** *Staff indicated that the change would be made.*
- **A Committee member questioned whether the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation (BTCF) should be identified under the Angel Fund Network proposal?** *Staff explained that while BTCF doesn’t directly work with businesses it does manage a large portfolio of investors that could be utilized to business start-up funds. Another Committee member followed up by asking why the Berkshire Chamber of Commerce was identified as the Activity Sponsor?* *Mr. Sexton noted that business retention and attraction activities, previously administered by the Berkshire Economic Development Corporation, was merged into 1Berkshire. In the interim these activities are not being administered by any organization. A committee member reinforced that an Angel Fund Network is a collaborative effort of multiple organizations. It was noted that some Committee members were concerned whether any organization in the region had the capacity or skills necessary to manage such this program. Mr. Matuszko suggested that the sponsor and partners for this implementation proposal be left as TBD. It was suggested, by a Committee member, that the next steps should also be modified to include “Identify organization partners,” “Identify a sponsor” and “Secure funding and resources to implement.” Another suggestion was to change the Status of the proposal from “Active” to “Concept.” Following additional discussion on this topic, by the Committee, it was determined that Mr. Matuszko’s suggestion, the changes to the Next Steps and the Status of the proposal should be made.*
- **A concern was raised regarding the placement of project based actions within the Implementation section.** *Mr. Sexton explained that the Committee decided, at the last meeting, that the priority projects should be incorporated into the Implementation section. The Committee member clarified that the placement of priority projects within this section gives emphasis to projects that shouldn’t necessarily get it and would reflect or support the project solicitation process that had minimal screening. The Committee member also indicated that the solicitation process was flawed. Mr. Matuszko tried to clarify the intent of the concern, specifically asking whether the comment was suggesting the complete removal of the projects from the Implementation section or whether projects should be listed under goals? The Committee member further stated that the placement of priority projects within the implementation section places them in the context of regional projects and regional commitments. While those projects may be important to certain individuals or groups it is disconcerting to place them on a regional implementation list and to direct resources to those projects over the next year. The Committee member thought it was the intent of the Committee to work with project proponents to refine and develop their proposals, but that that wouldn’t necessarily be a regional emphasis, in terms of limited resources as a regional level. Another Committee member clarified that the decision to incorporate projects into the Implementation section, at the last meeting, was based on an attempt to eliminate inequities among projects listed as implementations actions. Committee members didn’t want certain projects to be listed as implementing actions if they all projects weren’t going to be listed. Mr. Matuszko asked the Committee whether there was consensus to eliminate the project based actions. Mr. Sexton also mentioned that other CEDS documents have used different methods, such as using one project based implementation measure to reinforce the progression of projects development or every project has been listed as an implementation measure (similar to the revised implementation languages). After further discussion, Mr. Matuszko asked the Committee for a motion from the Committee directing staff how to modify the language of the Implementation section.*

Ms. Klefos made a motion to remove “Project Based Actions” from the Implementation section and keep the “Regional Activities.” The motion was seconded by Ms. Ruffer. Mr. Matuszko then asked for unanimous consent, Ms. LaRoche opposed, seeing no other objections the motion passed.

- **A result of the last item discussed, it was suggested that staff incorporate language that captures the broader regional concepts/priorities without identifying specific projects.** *The Committee member further clarified that the proposed language could be incorporated in this section as a couple of paragraphs or additional implementation measures. Mr. Karns explained that this suggestion would help to draw attention and give importance to projects without creating inequity among projects. A Committee member concurred with Mr. Karns, in that the identification of broader regional concepts would help to lessen disproportionate representation of specific projects, level the field for limited regional funds and resources. From further discussion some ideas, identified by the Committee, for incorporation as broad regional concepts/priorities included telecommunications, infrastructure, site development, creative*

industry, etc. Mr. Matuszko asked the Committee for a motion from the Committee to direct staff how this information should be presented.

Ms. Klefos made a motion to develop new “Regional Activities” encompassing broad regional concepts/priorities that reflect the removed “Project Based Actions,” without listing specific projects. The Motion was seconded by Mr. Bolton. Mr. Matuszko then asked for unanimous consent, seeing no objections the motion passed.

Mr. Matuszko asked whether there was interest among Committee members to continue reviewing the Regional Activities. Seeing general support for continuing the discussion, Mr. Matuszko began a line-by-line discussion of the remaining implementation measures.

The comments and concerns raised by Committee members, regarding the implementation measures, included:

- **It was suggested that the “Healthcare Pipeline” proposal be combined with the “Industry Sector Initiative” proposal.** *To clarify the suggestion, the Committee member explained that the Healthcare Pipeline seemed too specific and that it may fit well as a Next Step. Staff indicated that the edit would be made.*
- **Could language referencing or researching the “Quality of Life” need to attract people (workers) to the region.** *Staff explained that the regional retention and attraction program, listed under the Coordinated Economic Development Activities, may address the concern. Mr. Karns suggested that the Annual Workforce Blueprint may better address the concern. To clarify the focus of the concern, Mr. Matuszko asked whether the concern focused on emphasizing the Quality of Life needs for individuals. A Committee member felt this suggestion was too specific if identified as a stand-alone activity. Another Committee member mentioned that the workers for each industry are completely different and that it would be better to add language to the Next Step field of the Annual Workforce Blueprint proposal, focusing on the critical Quality of Life needs for workers. After further discussion, by the Committee, it was decided that language be added in the Next Step field of the Annual Workforce Blueprint.*
- **It was recommended that the language of the Implementation section be generic and not specific.**
- **A concern was raised regarding the “Berkshire Light Compact,” specifically what this proposal hoped to achieve.** *Mr. Matuszko explained that this is a new initiative being encouraged by Berkshire County’s legislative delegation to advocate for energy efficiency programs, effective consumer advocacy, a competitive electricity supply and more green power options. Mr. Karns then suggested it may be beneficial to incorporate this proposal as one of the elements of the broadly discussed Energy measure, much like the “Alternative Energy and Energy Infrastructure Improvements” proposal. This would consolidate implementation measures and provide a means to identify the regional priority of energy better. After further discussion, by the Committee, it was decided that a summarized proposal should be developed to highlight the region’s energy needs.*

Hearing no further comments or concerns, Mr. Matuszko moved the discussion to the next agenda item.

5. CEDS Strategy Committee’s Endorsement of 30-day Public Notice

Mr. Matuszko began by explaining to the Committee the remaining steps necessary to complete the CEDS process. Specifically, he noted the EDA requirement for a 30-day public comment period and that the final report needs to be sent to the EDA by June 30th. He then mentioned that staff was hopeful if there was general support for the Implementation section that the draft report could be distributed for public comments. He explained that Mr. Sexton has been working diligently to address the comments and edits that have been submitted for the other sections of the report. Mr. Matuszko then asked whether there was a motion regarding the announcement of the public comment period?

Mr. Hoffman made a motion authorizing the distribution of the Draft 2011 Berkshire Comprehensive Economic development Strategy for public review. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ludwiszewski. Mr. Matuszko asked for further discussion. Items that were raised are discussed below:

A Committee member urged staff to contact all agencies and organization to ensure they were supportive and willing to be listed as a sponsor or partner under the implementation measures. Mr. Matuszko explained that staff has already contacted most of the agencies and organizations identified, but that staff would double check with each entity. Another Committee member cautioned the use of the word “endorsement.” The Committee member also mentioned that staff should be very explicit that this draft report has not been endorsed by the CEDS Strategy Committee, the BRPC (full Commission) or the communities of Berkshire County. Mr. Matuszko acknowledged that staff did not intend the motion to endorse or approve the full report in any way, shape or form. Mr. Karns clarified

by explaining that staff was just looking for authorization from the CEDS Strategy Committee to announce the 30-day public comment period.

Mr. Matuszko then asked for unanimous consent on the motion, seeing no objections the motion passed.

6. Next Meeting (Tuesday, April 12th, 2011 at 12:30pm)

Mr. Matuszko explained that the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 17th. Knowing that there may be a large amount of comments to address following the public comment period, Mr. Matuszko suggested that another meeting in May be tentatively added. The Committee agreed that a second meeting should be tentatively scheduled for May 24th.

7. Other Items?

No items were raised.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30pm.

Documents distributed at the meeting included:

- Meeting Agenda
- Draft Minutes from the March 22nd, 2011 CEDS Strategy Committee meeting
- A copy of the revised language for the Implementation section
- A copy of the draft Project Priority List narratives

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**Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee**

*Tuesday, May 17th, 2011, 12:30 PM
2nd Floor Conference Room, BRPC Office, 1 Fenn Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201*

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes (Tuesday, April 12, 2011)
3. Public Comments (Non-Agenda Items)
4. Discussion of Public Comments ----- **Action Item**
5. Endorsement of the 2011 CEDS, as amended ----- **Action Item**
6. Next Steps
7. Next Meeting (Tuesday, May 24th, 2011, if necessary)
8. Other Items?
9. Adjournment

City and Town Clerks: Please post this notice pursuant to M.G.L., Chapter 39, Section 23B

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SHEILA IRVIN, Vice-Chair
GALE LABELLE, Clerk
CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

NATHANIEL W. KARNS, A.I.C.P.
Executive Director

**Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee**

Tuesday, May 17, 2011, 12:30 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room, BRPC Office, 1 Fenn Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201

Committee Members

Kristine Hazzard AB Roger Bolton X Heather Boulger AB Marya LaRoche (Alt) X Kevin O'Donnell X
Keith Girouard X Mike Nuwallie X Laury Epstein AB Mike Supranowicz X Lauri Klefos X
Michael Hoffman X Christine Ludwiszewski X Eleanore Velez X Deanna Ruffer X
Ann Dobrowolski (Alt) X Helena Fruscio X Tim Geller AB Robert Wilson AB Brenda Burdick X
Mark Berman AB

BRPC Staff

Nathaniel Karns X Thomas Matuszko X Daniel Sexton X Mark Maloy X

Public

Allison Johnson X

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order

At 12:30 PM on May 17, 2011 a meeting of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Strategy Committee was convened. Mr. Matuszko explained that he would be the moderator for this meeting and that the meeting was being recorded in accordance with the Open Meeting law. Mr. Matuszko then asked if there was anyone present whom wished to record the meeting as well. Seeing none the meeting began.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Matuszko asked for approval of the meeting minutes from the April 12, 2011 meeting of the CEDS Strategy Committee.

Mr. O'Donnell made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Ms. LaRoche. Mr. Matuszko then asked for unanimous consent, seeing no objections the motion passed.

3. Public Comments (Non-Agenda Items)

Mr. Matuszko then explained that this was a public meeting being held by Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. Noticing that there was a member of the public present; Mr. Matuszko asked if there was anyone whom wished to speak on any non-agenda items? The person introduced himself as Mr. Stuart Chase, President and CEO of 1Berkshires Strategic Alliance, Inc. Mr. Matuszko welcomed Mr. Chase. Recognizing that Mr. Chase will be representing 1Berkshires and more specifically the interests of the Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, Berkshire Visitors Bureau and Berkshire Creative, Mr. Matuszko asked the Committee if they would consider Mr. Chase as a member of the committee. The Committee agreed. Seeing no other members of the public, Mr. Matuszko then moved the discussion to the next agenda item.

4. Discussion of Public Comments

To start the discussion, Mr. Matuszko explained that staff had conducted a 30-day public comment period in accordance with the Economic Development Administration (EDA) regulations. To ensure awareness of the comment period, he explained that a public notice was posted in the Berkshire Eagle newspaper (April 16th), letters were mailed (communities, individuals, project proponents and organizations) and staff presented at a few meetings to discuss the draft report (BRPC full-commission and Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation). In total, BRPC received 17 responses to the request for comments. To allow Committee members enough time to review those comments, staff distributed the comments in two packets to the Committee on Friday, May 13th and Monday, May 16th. Mr. Matuszko noted that many of the responses were supportive of the report and its content, specifically the inclusion of the Wired West project proposal as a high regional priority.

To address the submitted comments, Mr. Matuszko explained staff took comments that were purely editorial or were deemed to be editorial by staff (i.e. changing or insertion of a word here and there) and made those changes. Mr. Matuszko further noted that Mr. Bolton had made a number of editorial comments, some related to the data, which staff went ahead and addressed those edits. Suggested comments that were deemed substantive (i.e. the striking of a paragraph or suggestion that add new projects), staff determined action by the Committee would be necessary to approve the changes. It was then suggested, by Mr. Matuszko, that the Committee spend the bulk of today's meeting discussion the more substantive comments and figuring out how to address them; with the hope that the plan could be accepted by the Committee and moved to the BRPC full-commission for action. Mr. Matuszko then asked whether Committee members agreed with this plan. Seeing no objections, Mr. Matuszko began discussing the first substantive comment; comments will be presented/discussed in order of receipt.

Potential Change #1

Mr. Matuszko explained that in addition to the editorial suggestions, Mr. Bolton had proposed a number of changes to *Chapter 6 Performance Measures*. He mentioned that this section was intended to lay out a structure for how the CEDS process would evaluate its implementation and success moving forward. In the Handout Packet, Mr. Matuszko explained that staff had developed some possible suggested language to initiate the discussion of the proposed changes. Mr. Bolton's suggested changes and the Committee's comments on each suggestion were:

- *On the first measure, I would include wording about the quality of the jobs, meaning wage level and other dimensions.*

Mr. Matuszko briefly discussed the proposed suggestion and how staff interpreted the change, as well as staff's proposed language addressing the change. Mr. Bolton added that any jobs are better than no jobs. He further explained that he didn't intend to abandoned the use of "number of jobs created" as a performance measure. He merely wanted to add some regarding the quality of those jobs. Mr. Bolton then provided some revised language to be considered by the Committee, which stated: "How many jobs have been created and retained? How many of those jobs have been high quality in the sense of wage levels, working conditions, etc." Another Committee member asked staff how easy it would be to gather information pertaining to quality of jobs? Mr. Matuszko thought that staff should be able to collect this data. He also mentioned, in the broader sense that data collection is going to be an ongoing hurdle for staff. Over the next year staff will be working to identify and gather quality data from different sources. **Mr. Matuszko asked for any additional comments. Seeing none, staff will revise the first performance measure according to Mr. Bolton's latest suggestion.**

- *On the third measure, I would add "nonprofit organizations." They can be significant employers. The Berkshires are an attractive place for new national/regional organizations concerned with the arts, environmental protection, retiree populations, etc. Then change "industry sectors" to "economic sectors."*

Mr. Matuszko briefly mentioned the proposed suggestion and how staff interpreted the change, as well as staff's proposed language addressing the change. A Committee member asked Mr. Bolton whether he envisioned "foundations" to be considered as a non-profit. Mr. Bolton said, "Yes." There was a brief discussion of the difference between non-profit and tax-exemption. To clarify, Mr. Bolton explained that he wanted the non-profits identified because they employ a great number of people, so it would be important to recognize them. Another Committee member explained that they saw the term "non-profit" as a very broad catchall and that this was really a data issue that would be fleshed out in the coming year. Mr. Matuszko agreed that the term "non-profit" was very broad; therefore, staff would have more leeway to collect data. Mr. Matuszko asked whether there were any additional comments. A Committee member asked whether we are measuring the number of businesses that are closing or merging. To clarify, the Committee member explained that the true measure of success is the number of businesses that stay in business. Mr. Matuszko thought that suggestion would fit better as another performance

measure. The Committee member suggested that the third measure just be reworded to read, **“What is the number of business and non-profit organization startups, mergers and closures since the implementation of the CEDS.”** ***Mr. Matuszko asked the rest of the Committee if they agreed with the suggested language. Seeing no objections, staff will revise the third performance measure as suggested.*** To address the last part of this suggested change, Mr. Matuszko explained that the word “industry” was to be replaced with “economic.” ***Mr. Matuszko asked the Committee if they agreed with the change. Seeing no objections, the language will be revised according to Mr. Bolton’s suggested language.***

- *Finally, eventually we would want to include a measure of the growth of the startups.*

Mr. Matuszko explained that staff felt the measuring of startups was already incorporated into the third measure, therefore, staff made no suggested changes. After re-reading the language, Mr. Bolton agreed that the language was acceptable.

Potential Change #2

Mr. Matuszko explained that the suggested change had been made by William Mulholland, a Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation (PERC) committee member, at their April 15th meeting. The suggested change and the Committee’s comments on the suggestion were:

- *William Mulholland suggested including the Compact for Higher Education goal that all citizens in Berkshire County achieve 16 years of education or training. That was a collective goal to get that workforce to be developed here and stay here. The younger kids are having bachelor degree which is important for their future and it will add a lot of clout as part of our work goals.*

Mr. Matuszko briefly discussed the proposed suggestion. He explained that after considering the change, staff thought it would be appropriate to include language in Chapter 4: The Action Plan for Economic Prosperity under Goal 4 and/or in Chapter 5: Implementation of the Berkshire CEDS under the Berkshire Compact activity. While the intent of staff’s proposed language addressed the comment, a Committee member was concerned that different trades may find the language objectionable. Those objections may be focused around the fact that there is more than one path for education after high school, trades, and that it doesn’t necessarily take 16-years. A Committee member noted that this is the 1st goal in the *Berkshire Compact for Higher Education* (Compact). Another Committee member mentioned, according to that goal the word “aspirations” is used instead of “achieve.” Ms. Ruffer, Pittsfield CDD, clarified that PERC’s intent was to reinforce the Compact as an important partner of economic development throughout Berkshire County and to embrace its goals. It was asked whether the language from the Compact’s goal be used as an objective. Mr. Matuszko stated that staff could review the Compact’s language and incorporate it into an objective. A Committee member was concerned that any language not be at the expense of vocational training and that any emphasis to “16-years” may still be objectionable. Therefore, the Committee member recommended language like, “Citizens of Berkshire County aspire to post-high school.” Rather than limiting it to a specific term. ***Mr. Matuszko asked whether Committee members were amenable to using language similar to that of the Compact. Seeing no objection, the Committee agreed.*** Mr. Matuszko then transitioned the discussion to the incorporation of another “Next Step” in the Berkshire Compact implementation activity. He explained the language would be changed to mirror the Compact. There was some discussion of what language should be used in a new next step. A Committee Member, from their phone, read the goals from the Compact. After hearing the goals, a Committee member noted that any language used should be derived from the Compact. Another Committee member asked why language couldn’t just be incorporated that states the CEDS is encouraging and/or supportive of the Compact. Another Committee member asked for clarification as to where such language would be incorporated. The Committee member stated that the general and broad statement could be used as an objective and then the goals used as next steps in the Implementation section. To ensure everyone understood what was being proposed, Mr. Sexton explained that the suggestion is to add an objective that states, “Encourage and support the goals of the Berkshire Compact for Higher Education” and then incorporate the goals of the Compact as next steps in the Implementation section. ***Since a different proposal addressing the Comment from PERC was suggested, Mr. Matuszko asked whether the Committee was acceptable of the latest alternative. Seeing no objections, staff will add a broad objective under Goal 4 discussing the support for the Compact and then revise the next steps under the Berkshire Compact implementation activity to mirror the Compacts goals.***

Potential Change #3

Mr. Matuszko then began to discuss the suggested changes that were submitted by the City of Pittsfield and the possible methods to addressing those changes. The suggested changes and the Committee’s comments on the potential changes were:

- *Add a Limited Access Connector Highway project (Massachusetts Turnpike through Pittsfield and north to North Adams)*

Mr. Matuszko briefly explained where staff thought the inclusion of such a project may fit within the Project Priority List. A Committee member, questioned whether the inclusion of a Limited Access Connector Highway project was a deviation to the Regional Highway Access Improvement project proposal? Mr. Sexton explained that staff understood the incorporation of the Limited Access Highway as a separate project. This project is another way to address the regional access issue discussed under the Regional Highway Access Improvement project proposal. A Committee member noted that he had taken it for granted that there was still work being done on a Limited Access Connector Highway (Bypass). The Association of the Berkshire Chamber of Commerce was initially organized, 15-20 years ago, to support the development of the Bypass. The Committee member assumed that it was always important and didn't understand why BRPC was identifying the Bypass as a project. According to the Committee member, the Bypass is an essential component to spurring economic development in the central and northern portions of the County. There has to be a way to place this project on the list. Another Committee member mentioned that transportation and access is the number one reason, according to them, why site locators don't consider Pittsfield, Adams, North Adams and other communities north of the Massachusetts Turnpike as holding development potential. Not to acknowledge the Bypass project in the plan and not to list it as a regionally important project simply because politically there isn't support for the project or not enough money is a disservice to the plan and the region, according to the Committee member. A Committee member asked whether the listing of the Bypass project is simply an issue of not having a project proposal submitted to review and evaluate? If that was the case, the Committee member asked how we were embracing other plans and ideas to ensure we didn't miss anything in this plan. Mr. Matuszko clarified by explaining that the Regional Highway Access Improvement project proposal was a catchall of projects from the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) that would address the region's north-south access issues. The Limited Access Highway was not called out, because it is not mentioned in the RTP. Mr. Matuszko then explained that there were a couple of options available to address this comment: (1) the Limited Access Highway project could be identified as an independent project proposal; (2) the limited access highway concept project could be incorporated into the broader Regional Highway Access Improvement project proposal; or (3) not add the project.

After hearing the Committee's conversation, Mr. Karns explained that BRPC has been the only entity in the region, to his knowledge, that has been actively pursuing or pushing for a north-south limited access highway for the past 15 years. During those years, BRPC has received limited regional support for this effort. If it is felt that a north-south limited access highway is a critical need for the region, then there needs to be substantial support seen from communities and organizations in the region before BRPC is willing to support and/or push for such a project at the state and federal levels. As it stands today, this project has and will not be included in the RTP that BRPC is preparing. As discussed in the RTP, BRPC has been working under the context (over the past 8 years) that the state is not willing to consider a north-south limited access highway; therefore, it was decided to build capacity within the existing system to meet the needs of the region.

A Committee member then mentioned that while it may seem insurmountable, specifically for one organization, to pursue this project; the least painless and maybe the most important venue to acknowledging the need for this project is to have it listed within this plan. Mr. Karns mentioned that while that may be the case, there are other planning documents where this project should be mentioned or letter of support should be written. A Committee member asked if there was a downside to include this project. Mr. Matuszko said, "No." Another Committee member said we should be cautious in truncating a larger process or when there are additional steps necessary for this project to come to fruition, especially when there are limited resources and capital in play. Mr. Karns reinforced that an earlier section in the CEDS report emphasizes that regional access is a strategic weakness. That being said, a project such as this which is presumably meant to address that strategic regional weakness would best fit within the Projects Representing the Greatest Needs Regionally project list. While it is certainly an infrastructure project, it truly embodies a "regional" project.

Ms. Klefos made a motion that the Limited Access Connector Highway project be added as a new project under the Projects Representing the Greatest Needs Regionally project list. To clarify the motion, Mr. Sexton asked Ms. Klefos whether the motion was to have a separate standalone project or if it should be incorporated in the Regional Highway Access Improvement project proposal under the Projects Representing the Greatest Needs Regionally project list. Ms. Klefos said, "It should be kept as a standalone project, yes." **The motion was then seconded by Ms. Burdick. Mr. Matuszko asked if there was any other discussion.** A Committee member preferred the project be placed under the Projects Representing the Greatest Needs Regionally project list, but to have the third item read, "Regional Highway Access Improvements, including a limited access highway serving central and northern Berkshire County." **Ms. Klefos accepted the amendment. Mr. Matuszko asked for any other discussion or comments. Seeing none, he asked for unanimous consent. There were no objections or abstentions.**

- *Add the McKay Street Pedestrian Improvements and Parking Garage Reconstruction*

Seeing a Committee member had a comment on this proposed change, Mr. Matuszko handed the floor to the Committee member. That member suggested that the McKay Street Pedestrian Improvements and Parking Garage Reconstruction be moved under the Central Sub-Region of Projects that Enhance the Region: Physical Development Category. The Committee member also suggested that the West Street Water Line Upgrade project should also be moved to this category. Mr. Matuszko mentioned that a lot of the projects could fit under different categories; however, staff thought is most appropriately fit as an infrastructure project. A number of other Committee members agreed with staff that this project was truly an infrastructure project and should remain in the infrastructure list.

To redirect the discussion, Mr. Matuszko asked the Committee whether they want to include the project in the project priority list or not. He noted that the project didn't rank high during the initial evaluation and again was not moved on to the list after the project proponent solicitation. A Committee member noted that after further discussion and consideration of the projects impact he thought the project should be placed on the priority list. Another Committee member mentioned that after more thought he considered the individuals living outside of Pittsfield whom uses this facility for attending work and/or shop in the stores downtown. In some ways it acts as an incubator business. Mr. Matuszko asked if there were any comments against placing the project on the list. A Committee member asked whether there could or would be any backlash from other project proponents that weren't able to move there project to the list after additional discussion. Mr. Matuszko explained that every project proponent received a solicitation requesting comments on the draft report. He also noted that the public comment period was intended to allow everyone an opportunity to comment and to gather new information/perspectives that would improve the report. Mr. Matuszko asked if there was a motion for the suggested change.

Mr. Hoffman made a motion to add the McKay Street Pedestrian Improvements and Parking Garage Reconstruction project on the Project Priority List under the Projects that Enhance the Region: Physical and Technology Infrastructure Category. The motion was seconded by Ms. Velez. Mr. Matuszko asked if there was any additional discussion. Seeing none, he asked for unanimous consent. Seeing no objections or abstentions the motion passed.

- *A comment regarding the overall use of the document stating, "...the resulting document has limited value and should not be used for any purpose other than meeting the pre-requisite for accessing Economic Development Administration grant programs."*

Mr. Matuszko then began to discuss the third comment submitted by the City of Pittsfield. He mentioned that staff didn't develop any suggested language to address the comment, because staff was unaware of how to resolve the issue. To clarify her language, Ms. Ruffer explained that the City and the Committee, in certain instances, has had anxieties about how the project solicitation process went. Specifically, there were concerns of whether this document could or would take on a life of its own in terms of the projects and be used inappropriately for or against projects as they go through funding requests at any level and from any sources. Ms. Ruffer mentioned that if there were language incorporated into the plan, potentially in the Project Priority List section, articulating this as a learning process and that the Committee had in fact identified concerns about the manner in which projects were solicited, the relationship this had to the evaluation process, and mentioning a commitment to evolve and refine the process through annual updates. Such a statement would reflect the work conducted by this Committee. It would also provide information to any state agency that may review/use this document as part of a project application for funding. Mr. Matuszko asked Ms. Ruffer if her intent was to further define and refine how the project solicitation process happened. Another Committee member agreed with Ms. Ruffer; however, she had some concerns that such a statement may raise red flags as to the validity of the process. The Committee member felt more comfortable incorporating language speaking to how the results of the project solicitation process where not what the Committee expected. The Committee member noted that there shouldn't be language added that somehow places the blame of the project solicitation process on the Committee, it was up to independent organizations to submit proposals. Another Committee member agreed and added further that it wasn't the solicitation process specifically, but that the information submitted by project proponents was not complete. Ms. Ruffer added that the evaluation process was another issue that bogged down the Committee. A number of other Committee members noted that this was, in many ways, an initial process and that it could be refined in the subsequent years. A Committee member mentioned that language should not be incorporated that would hurt any individual or organization in their pursuit of EDA funding and to not give any individual the opportunity to use the document as a weapon. Mr. Karns mentioned that while the process may have had its challenges and issues, he expects that there will be new issues and concerns during the next go-around. He then asked the Committee to review the project list and identify any significant gaps or major projects that were missing from the project priority list.

After hearing all the discussion, a Committee member suggested that some language or a paragraph be drafted, in the positive, explaining that that this was a learning process for the Committee and in many ways the County as a whole. While the results may have been unexpected, the Committee is dedicated to refining and improving the process as it moves forward. Mr. Matuszko agreed noted that that could be done. He noted that the language should identify some of the issues we ran into and some limitation of the process, while not impugning the process. Mr. Matuszko then asked Ms. Ruffer, to clarify, that the City's concerns focused on the evaluation process and how that lead to the prioritization of projects. While those may be the primary points from the City, a number of Committee members made recommendations that the language of such a statement should be keep broad and speak to the fact that this is an ongoing process that will have annual updates to improve this process in the future. A Committee member noted that the language should also speak to or be sensitive to the State's impressions of this report. **Mr. Matuszko asked if there were any Committee members that were against including a brief statement speaking to the discussed above. Seeing none, Mr. Matuszko then asked whether the Committee wished to review the language before it is incorporated into the report. The Committee said, "yes."**

Potential Change #4

Mr. Matuszko then began to discuss the suggested changes that were submitted by MassDevelopment and the possible methods to addressing those changes. The suggested changes and the Committee's comments on the potential changes were:

- *Add Massachusetts Office of Business Development as a partner under the Business Development Assistance measure*
- *Add MassDevelopment as a partner under the Berkshire Brownfields Program measure*

A Committee member clarified the first proposed change, in that MassDevelopment had requested that Massachusetts Office of Business Development be added as a partner under the Business Development Assistance measure. Mr. Sexton stated, "Yes." Briefly, the Committee discussed what name should be used to identify MassDevelopment. **Mr. Matuszko asked the Committee if there were any objections to the additions. Seeing none, Mr. Matuszko said staff would make the changes.**

Potential Change #5

Mr. Matuszko then began to discuss the suggested changes that were submitted by the Berkshire Chamber of Commerce and the possible methods to addressing those changes. The suggested changes and the Committee's comments on the potential changes were:

- *Consider eliminating the example of the river from this section*

To clarify the comment, Mr. Matuszko asked if Mr. Supranowicz would be willing to speak to the suggested change. Mr. Supranowicz explained that the Chamber didn't feel there was any specific analysis conducted by the Committee to identify contaminated sites; therefore some language, such as the word "labeled," should be added to recognize that the site were being identified as contaminated based on outside information (i.e. EPA, DEP, etc..). Furthermore, since the Housatonic River is a hot issue with supporters on both side, the Chamber felt it was best to eliminate the reference. Mr. Matuszko noted that the river reference was discussed previously and deemed important to incorporate. He noted, however, that the Committee has the ability to change that. Mr. Karns noted that it is important to recognize contaminated sites. He then provided the Committee with a couple examples (i.e. Lee's Mills). Mr. Supranowicz asked, "Who has listed those sites as contaminated?" Mr. Karns said, "the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection." Based on that information, Mr. Supranowicz suggested that language be added to clarify that. Mr. Sexton suggested that the mentioning of the assessment may help to educate and direct the read as to how and why sites are labeled as contaminated. Mr. Karns agreed that the use of the river reference was really necessary, but reinforced that it is important to recognize the presence of contaminated sites in the region as a regional weakness. A Committee member asked whether "identified" could be used as opposed to "labeled." Mr. Matuszko suggested that language such as "per the Environmental Protection Agency, Massachusetts and other agencies" be added after the word "contaminated." **Mr. Matuszko asked whether the Committee agreed to the addition of Mr. Matuszko's suggested language, use the word "labeled" and the reference to the river be deleted. The Committee agreed.**

- *A limited access highway would truly be the most positive economic growth mechanism for many regions in the county, including the William Stanley Business Park with its rail access. The report may benefit by not including language that indicates this project is not feasible, unless there is objective published data that suggests otherwise.*

Mr. Matuszko asked Mr. Supranowicz whether he felt this comment had been addressed as a result of

incorporating the North-South Limited Access Connector Highway project into the Project Priority List. Mr. Supranowicz said, “yes.” (There was no further discussion on this comment.)

- *Is it possible that naming locations for projects that merit county benefits could have adverse effects by such naming? Will a sports complex project in a community other than the named one in the report be considered for funding on an equal basis as one named? If not, the committee should reconsider the naming on any such projects in the report.*

To clarify the comment, Mr. Supranowicz explained that the Chambers was concerned about how the identification and association of a specific project with a location may preclude other persons or organizations from pursuing the funding for a similar type of project, he used the indoor soccer facility as an example. Mr. Matuszko explained that location of a project was used as part of the process used to identify priority projects. Mr. Supranowicz agreed. However, he also noted that this was part of the problem with the evaluation process, because Committee members were unsure whether they were to be ranking the projects that were submitted or trying to identify the significant economic development projects regionally. A Committee member mentioned that regardless of the location many of the projects on the Project Priority List will have a regional impact. A Committee member suggested that the location be eliminated from the name (i.e. changing Berkshire Mall/Civic Center/Hotel to Civic Center/Hotel), but that the location is maintained in the project narrative. **Mr. Matuszko asked whether the Committee agreed with the suggestion. Seeing no objections, Mr. Matuszko stated that staff would make the change.**

Potential Change #6

Mr. Matuszko then began to discuss the suggested change submitted by the Sheffield Land Trust and the possible methods to addressing those changes. The suggested changes and the Committee’s comments on the potential changes were:

- Add “agriculture” or “agricultural” to “The Vision for the Berkshires” statement, such as:

The Committee briefly discussed how the word be included. It was suggested that the word “agriculture” be used, but that “and” be changed to a “;”. **Mr. Matuszko asked whether the Committee was agreeable to the change. Seeing no objections, Mr. Matuszko stated that staff would make the change.**

5. Next Steps

Mr. Matuszko explained that the edits discussed today would be made and then staff would forward the plan to the BRPC full-commission for adoption at the June 20th meeting. In according with the EDA’s regulations, however, this plan must be first approved by the CEDS Strategy Committee before the Commission adopts it. With that said, Mr. Matuszko asked the Committee if there was a motion to approve the plan, as amended.

Ms. LaRoche made a motion to approve the plan as amended. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ludwizewski. Mr. Matuszko asked if there was any additional discussion. Seeing none, Mr. Matuszko asked for any objections or abstentions. Seeing none, the motion was unanimously passed.

6. Next Meeting/Steps (Tuesday, April 12th, 2011 at 12:30pm)

Since the Committee approved the 2011 Berkshire CEDS, as amended, Mr. Matuszko explained that the previously scheduled meeting for Tuesday, May 24th would not be necessary. He did note, however, that if the BRPC full-commission has the ability to remand the plan back to the committee for changes.

7. Other Items?

No items were raised.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30pm.

Documents distributed at the meeting included:

- Meeting Agenda
- Draft Minutes from the April 12, 2011 CEDS Strategy Committee meeting
- A Handout Packet containing possible suggested language from staff to address the comments received

