

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
1 FENN STREET, SUITE 201, PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS 01201
TELEPHONE (413) 442-1521 · FAX (413) 442-1523
www.berkshireplanning.org

SHEILA IRVIN, Chair
KYLE HANLON, Vice-Chair
MARIE RAFTERY, Clerk
CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

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

MEETING NOTICE

A meeting of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
will be held on:

Thursday, March 17, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

Please Note: *In the case of inclement weather on the day of the meeting, please call BRPC (413-442-1521, ext 15) to confirm if the meeting will still be held.*

Meeting Material: All written materials for the meeting are posted on BRPC's website: www.berkshireplanning.org. Click on the calendar date for the meeting and materials available will be listed.

AGENDA

I. Opening (7:00-7:05)

- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Approval of Minutes of January 21, 2016 Meeting

II. Comments from the Public (7:05-7:10)

Members of the public may offer comments regarding topics which are on the agenda or other matters which they wish to bring to the Commission's attention. Comments are limited to no more than three minutes and are to be directed to the Commission.

III. Delegates' Issues (7:10-7:15)

Delegates and Alternates may bring up any issue not on the agenda.

IV. 2016 – Berkshire (County) Regional Planning Commission's 50th (Gold) Anniversary - (7:15-7:25)

BRPC was created in 1966 and formally designated as an official regional planning agency in the Commonwealth. At the January meeting some information was provided on what was going on in the county and elsewhere in 1966. At this meeting, some of the highlights of the Commission's first 25 or so years will be presented.

V. Economic Development District Designation Update (7:25-7:35)

Last year the Commission approved seeking approval from the U.S. Economic Development Administration for designation of Berkshire County as an Economic Development District. We are one of the very few regions in Massachusetts not so designated which hampers efforts to obtain

(over)

their support for both economic development planning and public works infrastructure funding. We will provide a brief update regarding the status of seeking that status.

VI. US Bike Route 7 Designation Effort (7:35-8:00)

Over the past several years, the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area has been convening an annual meeting to create a multi-use path across western New England, connecting the East Coast Greenway along Long Island Sound to the well-established bicycle touring route in Quebec, leading to Montreal. As part of that effort, this year the three western New England states are sponsoring a potential application to the U.S. Department of Transportation to designate this route US Bike Route 7. All communities along the route in Connecticut and Vermont have approved this; work is beginning in Massachusetts to gain local approval here. Senior Planner Emily Lindsey will present the proposal to the Commission. Commission endorsement is requested.

VII. Reappointments to Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority (8:00-8:10)

As one of the legacies of Berkshire County government handed over to BRPC, we are the appointing authority for local members to the County Regional Housing Authority. Two board member's terms expire and we have been asked to reappoint them. The two members are Richard Grillon of Washington and Lisa Sloane of Lee.

VIII. Community Compact Agreements in the Berkshires (8:10-8:25)

At January's meeting, the interrelationship between the District Local Technical Assistance program and the new Community Compact program was raised. We will brief the Commission on the status of Community Compacts in the Berkshires and highlight the opportunities that are still available to almost all of our communities to participate in or increase their participation in this program.

IX. Consideration of Limited Comments on the State Budget as Proposed by the Governor (8:25-8:45)

X. Approval of Executive Committee Actions between January 21 and March 17, 2016 (8:45-8:50)

XI. Executive Director's Report (8:50-9:00)

- A. Presentation on the Renewable Wood Heat Sustainable Supply for the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership Project – Thursday, March 24th, Franklin Regional Council of Governments, Greenfield
- B. Berkshire Conservation Commission Coalition Meeting – Tuesday, March 29th, BRPC
- C. 5th Thursday Dinner for Planning & Zoning Boards – “Designing for Complete Streets” - Thursday, March 31st, Mazzeo's Ristorante, Pittsfield
- D. Aging in Place Open Forum – Thursday, March 31st, Pittsfield and Adams; Friday, April 1st, Great Barrington
- E. 2017 State Budget and District Local Technical Assistance Funding
- F. Berkshires Tomorrow and Amazon Smile
- G. MassDOT Complete Streets Application Opened
- H. Complete Streets Policy Template Available on BRPC Website
- I. MassDOT Project to Renumber Interstate Exits
- J. Status of Final Decision by EPA on Clean-up of PCBs from the Housatonic River
- K. Other

XII. Adjournment (9:00)

Other interested citizens and officials are invited to attend.

All times listed are estimates of when specific agenda items may be discussed.

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

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
1 FENN STREET, SUITE 201, PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS 01201
TELEPHONE (413) 442-1521 · FAX (413) 442-1523
Massachusetts Relay Service: TTY: 771 or 1-800-439-2370
www.berkshireplanning.org

SHEILA IRVIN, Chair
KYLE HANLON, Vice-Chair
MARIE RAFTERY, Clerk
CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

NATHANIEL W. KARNS
Executive Director

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Thursday, January 21, 2016
At the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Office
1 Fenn Street, Suite 201, Pittsfield, MA 01201

I. Call to Order

A. The meeting is called to order at: 7:00 PM

Chair Sheila Irvin reminded all per the open meeting law, BRPC records all meetings. Others may record the meeting after informing the chair. Any documents presented must be left with the chair at the meeting.

B. Introductions/Roll Call

The following Commission members are present:

Peter Traub – Cheshire Delegate
Caleb Darby – Dalton Delegate
Gregory Cherin – Egremont Delegate
Malcom Fick – Gt. Barrington Delegate
Mark Smith – Lenox Delegate
Bob Bott – Mt. Washington Delegate
Jamie Mullen – New Marlborough Delegate
Kyle Hanlon – North Adams Delegate
Sheila Irvin – Pittsfield Delegate
CJ Hoss – Pittsfield Alternate
Kate Fletcher – Stockbridge Delegate
Marie Raftery – Stockbridge Alternate
Sarah Hudson – Tyringham Alternate
Dana Bixby – West Stockbridge Delegate
Roger Bolton – Williamstown Alternate

Staff Present:

Nat Karns – Executive Director
Tom Matuszko – Assistant Director
Marianne Snizek – Office Manager
Clete Kus – Transportation Manager
Emily Lindsey – Transportation Senior Planner
Eammon Coughlin - Planner

Others Present: Paul Smernoff – Williamstown

C. Approval of Minutes of Commission Committee Meeting of November 19, 2015 Meeting

Kyle Hanlon moved to approve with corrections; Seconded by Mark Smith. Unanimously approved with 1 abstention.

II. Comments from the Public - None

III. Delegates' Issues – None

IV. 2016 – Berkshire (County) Regional Planning Commission's 50th (Gold) Anniversary

BRPC was created in 1966 and formally designated as an official regional planning agency in the Commonwealth.

Sparkling juice was served in fluted glasses to celebrate BRPC's 50 years. Sheila toasted to the first 50 years of wonderful achievements and great leadership and the next 50 years where we have been expanding our responsibilities and who knows what will come next.

Nat pointed out eight communities that were the initial members: North Adams, Pittsfield, Adams, Cheshire, Dalton, Great Barrington, Lanesborough, Lee, Lenox and New Marlborough.

Nat also gave some facts and fun information from 1966. The political leaders, national politics, and international facts. The population in Pittsfield, North Adams and Adams were the three largest communities in 1966 and still are. Forty one percent of the county's employment was in manufacturing which has dramatically changed since then. Also highlighted were sports facts and pop culture.

V. MassDOT Complete Streets Program

Eammon Coughlin, Planner, and Emily Lindsey, Senior Transportation Planner, gave a presentation on the new MassDOT Complete Streets Program that provides funding for the development of a Complete Streets Policy and Prioritization Plan as well as the implementation of Complete Streets projects.

Eammon reviewed what complete streets are and what can be addressed in a Complete Streets Program are connectivity, safety, accessibility, health, and mobility issues. Some examples of improvements are:

- Street lighting
- Widening shoulders
- Signalization and timing
- Traffic calming
- Shared use paths
- Transit shelter
- Pedestrian access to transit stops
- Bicycle parking
- Bicycle lanes
- Wayfinding
- Sidewalks
- Pedestrian Islands/Medians
- Streetscaping

Emily explained the process for the MassDot Program and offered BRPC's technical assistance. The new MassDot Complete Street Program is additional money the communities can access to assist them with their needs for improvements. This money is additional money above the Chapter 90 funds communities currently receives and is not part of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) process.

CJ Hoss pointed out MassWorks grant applications give additional points for a community that has a Complete Streets Policy.

Tier 1 Complete Streets Policy

- Community must attend a Complete Streets 101 workshop
- Develop/adopt a Complete Streets Policy (BRPC can partner with your community and provide technical assistance)

A Communities Complete Streets Policy will have a vision, core commitment, best practices and then implementation. Each community's policy will be different to meet their own goals.

BRPC has developed a draft Complete Streets Policy template to assist communities in their efforts to enter into MassDOTs program. The template can be found on BRPC's website:

<http://berkshireplanning.org/events/announcements/draft-complete-streets-policy-template>

Submit your policy or commit to developing/adopting a Complete Street Policy. Then MOVE to the Tier 2.

Tier 2 Prioritization Plan

- Develop a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan (BRPC can partner with your community and provide technical assistance)

Your Prioritization Plan will have goals, performance measures, project locations, facilities and costs, prioritization methodology, identify priorities, submit non-motorized data inventory and reporting requirements.

Then MOVE to the Tier 3.

Tier 3 Project Funding for Construction – MassDOT has not released information yet.

BRPC will communicate information on Project Funding once received from MassDOT.

Questions about the MassDOT Complete Streets Program can be directed to Emily Lindsey at elindsey@berskhireplanning.org or 413-442-1521 ext. 12.

VI. District Local Technical Assistance Requests for 2016

Tom briefed the Commission on the District Local Technical Assistance projects awarded as of January 21, 2016. Other projects are pending or on hold as BRPC tries to seek other funding sources or sort through projects that are related to Community Compacts. Community Compacts may have funding or resources available for communities.

The Community Compact is a program under the Baker Administration for the state to partner with the towns and cities. The Select boards or Mayors can pick up to three best practices. There is a cabinet that reviews how the state can help the towns and cities either with staff assistance or grant money.

Tom explained the Rest of River, Natural Gas pipeline and the 40 R District in Great Barrington projects will continue. New zoning bylaws, green communities, master plan and open and recreation projects will be for planning ahead for growth. Supporting regional services and collaboration are other projects that include shared services between communities, Regional Age Friendly Housing and the Regional Economic Development District.

VII. Consideration of Community Assessments for FY 2017

The Finance Committee has proposed a 2.5% increase in community assessments for FY 2017. By law, the municipalities must be notified of their assessments no later than February each year so that they may be included in city/town budgets.

Nat explained the community assessment money is BRPC's only flexible money to spend on grant writing, responding to local technical assistance requests and Environmental Reviews.

Jamie Mullen moved to approve a 2.5% increase in community assessments for FY2017; Seconded by Kyle Hanlon. Unanimously approved.

VIII. Approval of Executive Committee Actions between November 19, 2015 and January 21, 2016

The Executive Director's approval to receive reimbursement of professional development training with no salary increase was explained. The Executive Committee approved the Executive Director to receive reimbursement of professional development funds and suggested the training be for Succession Planning for when Nat retires in a few years. If the funds are not used then the Executive Director would be paid a one-time bonus.

Kyle Hanlon moved to approve all Executive Committee actions between November 19, 2015 and January 21, 2016; seconded by Jamie Mullen. Unanimously approved.

IX. Executive Director's Report

A. Final Audit for FY 2015

Adelson & Company PC is BRPC's accounting firm. Nat explained Adelson is the only accounting firm in the area that does the federal requirements for our annual audit that are needed due to our Federal Grants. Bob Bott expressed his opinion that he thought all towns should have audits done by an outside firm every few years. Marianne explained Adelson does do some of the town audits in Berkshire County. Tom explained Franklin Regional Council of Governments does offer shared accounting services and Pioneer Valley is starting this service.

B. MassDOT Public Meeting on Western Turnpike State of Good Repair and Tolls

C. Current Status of Tennessee Gas Pipeline's Northeast Energy Direct FERC Permitting

D. Update of Great Barrington Parcel Maps

E. Other

XII. Adjournment

Kyle Hanlon made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Kate Fletcher. Unanimously approved. Adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Materials distributed or presented during this meeting:

Meeting Agenda
Draft Meeting Minutes
Approval of Executive Committee Actions Memo
Executive Director's Report
Complete Streets Fact Sheet
Complete Streets Power point
DLTA16 Awards as of 1.21.2016
Assessment Options FY17
MassDOT public meeting flyer

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
1 FENN STREET, SUITE 201, PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS 01201
TELEPHONE (413) 442-1521 · FAX (413) 442-1523
www.berkshireplanning.org

SHEILA IRVIN, Chair
KYLE HANLON, Vice-Chair
MARIE RAFTERY, Clerk
CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

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

MEMORANDUM

TO: Delegates and Alternates, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

FROM: Nathaniel W. Karns, AICP, Executive Director

DATE: March 11, 2016

SUBJ: Economic Development District Designation Update

The Commission endorsed pursuing the establishment of an economic development district (EDD) in Berkshire County through an application to the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) at your September 2015 meeting. This endorsement was subject to bringing the EDD's Governing Board's bylaws back to the Commission for consideration before actually submitting an application. We have been requested to provide an update on the status of that effort.

Progress has been limited to-date, primarily due to the effort which has been put into assisting Pittsfield and the Pittsfield Economic Development Authority in preparing a preliminary and now final application for funding under EDA's Public Works Assistance Program for the needed traffic improvements at the intersections serving the William Stanley Business Park. That application seeks \$1.0 million in EDA funds to be matched with \$1.0 million in City funds. The City funds were approved at the City Council's meeting this week and the grant application is expected to be submitted by March 29th.

In the meantime, as has been requested by EDA, we have submitted some preliminary information to them for their review and comment but have not yet received any input back. Their suggestion had been to give them a chance to give us input before we proceeded to the next steps. We have not been nagging them on this because the EDA staff (one person serves us) is busy with assisting in moving the public works grant along in their process.

Once we have feedback from EDA, we will go through the following steps:

- 1) We will work on the revised bylaws; hopefully we can present those to the Commission at your May meeting.
- 2) We will begin work to get the necessary local endorsements from at least a majority of Berkshire County municipalities. This is a requirement of EDA. The primary city's (Pittsfield) mayor has to be one of those but based on conversations with Mayor Tyer and the recent work on the public works grant, we are confident that is not a problem. We will inform our delegates and alternates from each community when we are prepared to make requests to the other city and the 30 towns for endorsements and we will request your assistance if presentations are requested from your community (staff would make the presentation but it helps to have the delegate and/or alternate there providing support).
- 3) After receiving the needed local endorsements, we then have to get an endorsement from the State and would work through the Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development to get that.



HOUSING SERVICES & MEDIATION PROGRAM

Administered by *Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority*

1 FENN STREET ~4th Floor – PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS 01201

(413) 443-7138 FAX (413) 443-8137

email bcrha@berkshire.net



January 29, 2016

Nathaniel W. Karns, Executive Director
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
One Fenn Street, 3rd Floor
Pittsfield, MA 01201

RE: Board Appointment

Dear Mr. Karns,

I respectfully request your assistance in making a re-appointment to the Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority's (BCRHA) volunteer Board of Commissioners.

As you already know, BCRHA drafted new enabling legislations in 2002, which allowed BCRHA's Board of Commissioners to remain viable after the elimination of county government. Pursuant to said enabling legislation, the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission was granted the power to appoint two members to BCRHA's Board of Commissioners.

On behalf of BCRHA, I respectfully request that you re-appoint Richard Grillon, a resident of Washington, MA and Lisa Sloane, a resident of Lee, each to a three year term. Mr. Grillon has served on the BCRHA Board of Commissioners for almost twenty years and he has served as the Chairperson for over twelve years. Ms. Sloane has been a member of the Board of Commissioners for over 15 years and both members continue to serve as an important member of the Board, contributing in the areas of service development and fiscal and organizational management. With both their consistent support as Board members, BCRHA has been allowed to remain a vital community service organization meeting the diverse housing needs of Berkshire County.

Please do not hesitate to contact me, if you should have any questions regarding this request or other issues related to this agency.

Very Truly Yours,

Brad Gordon
Executive Director

Providing dispute resolution programming; comprehensive housing counseling, including legal and educational counseling services, loss mitigation/ anti-foreclosure counseling, homelessness prevention/ tenancy preservation services and homelessness resolution and housing search assistance; and anti-poverty resources TO ALL BERKSHIRE COUNTY RESIDENTS.

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

1 FENN STREET, SUITE 201, PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS 01201

TELEPHONE (413) 442-1521 • FAX (413) 442-1523

www.berkshireplanning.org

SHEILA IRVIN, Chair
KYLE HANLON, Vice-Chair
MARIE RAFTERY, Clerk
CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

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

MEMORANDUM

TO: Delegates and Alternates, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

FROM: Nathaniel W. Karns, AICP, Executive Director

DATE: March 11, 2016

SUBJ: Community Compact Agreements in the Berkshires

We have been discussing the Baker Administration's Community Compact Program at various Commission meetings since it was announced a little over a year ago. At your January meeting, we also discussed its relationship with the District Local Technical Assistance program which is funded by the State but operated by the regional planning agencies. About 3/5 of the cities and towns in the Commonwealth have submitted Community Compact applications to-date (217 of 351). In the Berkshires, 22 of 32 (over 2/3) have submitted applications, however 13 of those submitted those solely for Regional Cooperation based on a strong push by Rep. Pignatelli to initiate those types of discussions in his legislative district. This latter point is not intended at all to sound negative towards those efforts, simply to highlight that many of these communities could have (and still can) signed on for more than that one best practice.

The attached chart shows the status of Community Compact applications for all 32 municipalities in the Berkshires as of February 18th. The far right column includes information on District Local Technical Assistance requests BRPC received. Eight of those align with Community Compact commitments (4 involving shared services, primarily in southern Berkshire towns) and those are highlighted. There are a number of DLTA requests which could still be added as additional or new Community Compact requests and those are blanks highlighted in the second column from the left. There are thirteen blanks in this category.

A potential benefit to the communities of submitting those thirteen as Community Compact commitments is that they may bring additional State resources to assist in meeting the requests made through the DLTA program. As we discussed at the January Commission meeting, we have received a larger number of DLTA requests than in years past and are not going to be able to make progress on some of them, and less progress than would be desirable on others. Since these are things the communities indicated they want to do anyway, these items aren't anything new or additional and the communities might as well take credit for their activities under the Community Compact program.

The State has indicated that they are quite willing to continue to accept new Community Compact applications and additional commitments from communities who already have signed Compacts as long as they don't exceed three total commitments. The process is the same: there is an on-line application which is only open to local officials. The request has to come from the mayor or select board so communication needs to occur if you are not either of those.

Attachments: (2)
Community Compacts – Berkshire County
Community Compact Best Practice Areas

COMMUNITY COMPACTS – BERKSHIRE COUNTY

As of February 18, 2016

Community	Chosen Best Practice(s)	Status	Relationship to DLTA Requests/ Potential Compact Best Practice
Adams	Education: Admin/Finance	Signed Compact	Berkshire County Education Task Force
	HED: Preparing for Success		
Alford	Regional Cooperation (4th Berk.)	Signed Compact	
Becket	Regional Cooperation (4th Berk.)	Signed Compact	
Cheshire			Master Plan/EOEEA: Sustainable Development and Land Protection
			Accessory Apartment Bylaw/HED: Housing
Clarksburg	EOEEA: Max energy efficiency/Renewables	Signed Compact	Energy Reduction Plan & Implementation
	Regional Cooperation		Regional Shared Services
			Zoning Revisions/ EOEEA: Sustainable Development and Land Protection
Dalton			Master Plan/ EOEEA: Sustainable Development and Land Protection
			Economic Development/HED: Preparing for Success
			Regional Shared Services

Egremont	Regional Cooperation (4th Berk.)	Signed Compact	
			Corridor Zoning/ EOEEA: Sustainable Development and Land Protection
			Commercial Outdoor Recreation Bylaw/HED: Preparing for Success
Florida			
Great Barrington	Regional Cooperation (4th Berk.)	Signed Compact	
	HED: Preparing for Success		Housing Planning (40R)
	Tech: Other (Fiber expansion)		
Hancock			
Hinsdale	EOEEA: Sustainable Development/land protection	Recommend to move forward with Compact signing	Master Plan Committee assistance
	Fin Mgmt: Budget Doc		
	Trans: Complete Streets		
Lanesborough			
Lee	Regional Cooperation (4th Berk.)	Signed Compact	Regional Shared Services
Lenox	Regional Cooperation (4th Berk.)	Signed Compact	Regional Shared Services
			Housing Planning/HED: Housing
Monterey	Regional Cooperation (4th Berk.)		
	HED: Housing		
	Fin Mgmt: Capital Improvements Program		
Mount Washington	Fin Mgmt: Review Financial Management Structure	Signed Compact	
	Regional Cooperation (4th Berk.)		
	Tech: Cyber-security		
New Ashford			

New Marlborough	Regional Cooperation (4th Berk.)	Signed Compact	Regional Shared Services
			Housing Planning/HED: Housing
			Open Space & Recreation Plan Update: EOEEA: Sustainable Development/land protection
North Adams	HED: Other (Urban Renewal Plan)	Signed Compact	
			Zoning Revisions/HED: Preparing for Success
Otis	Regional Cooperation (4th Berk.)	Signed Compact	
Peru			
Pittsfield	Fin Mgmt: Budget Document	Recommend to move forward with Compact signing	
	Fin Mgmt: Long Range Planning		
	Fin Mgmt: Review Financial Management Structure		
Richmond	Regional Cooperation (4th Berk.)	Signed Compact	
			Long Range Planning Committee/Fin Mgmt: Long-Range Planning or Other
Savoy			
Sandisfield	Fin Mgmt: Financial Policies	Signed Compact	
	Fin Mgmt: Review Financial Management Structure		
	Regional Cooperation (4th Berk.)		
Sheffield	Regional Cooperation (4th Berk.)	Signed Compact	
Stockbridge	Regional Cooperation (4th Berk.)	Signed Compact	
Tyringham	Regional Cooperation (4th Berk.)	Signed Compact	
Washington	Regional Cooperation (4th Berk.)	Signed Compact	
West Stockbridge	Regional Cooperation (4th Berk.)	Signed Compact	
Williamstown	Trans: Complete Streets	Recommend to move forward with Compact signing	
			Housing Planning/HED: Housing
Windsor			



The Official Website of the Governor of Massachusetts

Governor Charlie Baker

Home > The Administration > Councils, Cabinets, Commissions, Panels, & Task Forces > Community Compact Cabinet > Best Practice Areas

Best Practice Areas

- Governor Charlie Baker
- Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito
- Cabinet
- Governor's Internship Program
- Councils, Cabinets, Commissions, Panels, & Task Forces

Chronic Unemployment Task Force
Community Compact Cabinet
Compact Application
Frequently Asked Questions
Commonwealth Commitments
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Best Practice Areas
Signed Compacts
Governor's Council on Sexual Assault & Domestic Violence
Office of Access & Opportunity
Seaport Economic Council
Workforce Skills Cabinet

- Judicial Nominating Commission
- SJC Nominating Commission
- Staff

EDUCATION Best Practices

Administration and Finance

Best Practice: Funding is assigned to the proper cost centers, costs are allocated appropriately between the municipal government and the school district, and costs and information is shared in a way that facilitates school-based budgeting. There is evidence that municipal and school administration and finance services are shared to realize economies of scale and may include the consolidation or regionalization of district administration. Data reporting is coordinated across all departments to align staffing and student data with financial reporting, and is consistent with DESE guidelines in order to facilitate benchmarking and comparisons to other schools and districts. Required data reports are sent to DESE through the School Interoperability Framework (SIF). Data reporting meets all quality assurance metrics for timeliness and accuracy.

Coordination and Collaboration – Professional Development

Best Practice: There is shared access to training and supports in regard to academic improvement best practices, with other schools in the same district, and with other districts (e.g. curriculum development, lesson plans, professional development, use of data to inform instruction, benchmark program finance, and track outcomes). Educational collaboratives and inter district agreements are utilized to achieve cost efficiencies and improve program offerings.

Coordination and Collaboration – Higher Education

Best Practice: There is evidence of partnership agreements with higher education institutions to improve articulation with college credit as well as to promote college and career readiness.

Coordination and Collaboration - Transitions

Best Practice: Transition supports are provided between early education and K-12 district and charter schools and demonstrate coordinated activities and resources that maximize families' access to supports promoting successful birth to eight transitions, with a specific focus on Kindergarten transitions.

Coordination and Collaboration – Early Education

Best Practice: There is evidence of partnerships with private providers in the provision of high quality early education and out of school time services to leverage existing resources, avoid duplication of services and enhance and streamline systems for children and families. The community can demonstrate local adoption of a framework to organize, align and integrate community efforts in early education and care, out of school time services, and family engagement.

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT Best Practices

Maximizing Energy Efficiency and Renewable Opportunities

Best Practice: There are documented and measurable energy use reduction goals; Clean power is generated locally; The municipal fleet is fuel efficient; Investments have been made in energy efficient municipal street lighting; Energy efficiency improvements and renewable thermal heating and cooling upgrades have been made to public facilities (e.g. housing and schools); Energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades have been made to water/wastewater plants.

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

Best Practice: There is plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change; Regulations and incentives discourage new development in at-risk locations, enhance the resilience of existing development, and encourage mixed-use growth and travel by multiple modes to reduce emissions; Critical coastal and inland infrastructure, buildings, and energy facilities are prepared for more frequent and intense storms.

Sustainable Development and Land Protection

Best Practice: There is a Master, Open Space and Recreation, or other Plan to guide future land conservation and development; Smart growth consistent zoning has been adopted (e.g. techniques in the MA Smart Growth/Smart Energy Toolkit); Investments in infrastructure and land conservation are consistent with the MA Sustainable Development Principles.

Comprehensive Water Resource Management

Best Practice: There is a plan to supply and conserve water, manage stormwater, and treat and reuse wastewater; The MA Water Conservation Standards are being implemented; Municipal regulations promote green infrastructure and the use of low impact development techniques; An Enterprise Fund or other mechanism is in place to fund maintenance and replacement of water infrastructure.

Solid Waste and Site Cleanup

Best Practice: There is a documented plan and approach to Brownfield redevelopment; There is a solid waste master plan; Waste management best practices have been adopted (e.g. "pay as you throw").

Promote Local Agriculture

Best Practice: A right to farm by-law or ordinance has been adopted; The community supports access to fresh produce through the creation of farmers markets and/or establishment of urban agriculture (e.g. commercial ventures or community gardens); Farmland is conserved through acquisition and/or regulation; Sustainable forestry is encouraged.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT Best Practices

Budget Document

Best Practice: The annual budget is a municipality's most important annual policy-making document. As such, the budget document details all revenues and expenditures, provides a narrative describing priorities and financial challenges, and otherwise offers clear and transparent communication of community policies to residents and businesses.

Financial Policies

Best Practice: Sound financial policies provide important structure and consistency around local fiscal policy decisions and are documented and adhered to. This best practice is achieved by evidence of documented fiscal policies including reserve levels, capital financing, and use of Free Cash.

Long-range Planning/Forecasting

Best Practice: Financial forecasting and long-term planning help communities detect fiscal challenges earlier, develop strategies to address issues that emerge, and provide the context for analyzing multi-year contracts and other financial trends. There is a documented financial planning process and plan that assesses long-term financial implications of current and proposed policies, programs and assumptions.

Capital Planning

Best Practice: Funding capital needs on a regular basis is critical to maintaining publicly-owned assets and delivering services effectively. The community develops and documents a multi-year capital plan that reflects a community's needs, is reviewed annually and fits within a financing plan that reflects the community's ability to pay.

Review Financial Management Structure

Best Practice: A strong and appropriately structured finance team is critical to both the short- and long-term health of a municipality. Communities striving for this best practice will evaluate the structure and reporting relationships of its finance offices to ensure that they support accountability and a cohesive financial team process. To the extent that gaps are identified, the community develops a written plan for implementation of the desired finance team structure.

HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Best Practices

Preparing for Success

Best Practice: There is a demonstrated ability to partner with the private sector, non-profits, and public sector organizations in order to advance the housing and economic development vision and goals of the community as evidenced by the successful completion of public/private/non-profit project(s).

Housing

Best Practice: There is a documented community-supported housing plan that accounts for changing demographics, including young families, workforce dynamics, and an aging population.

Infrastructure

Best Practice: There is evidence of a community plan and process being followed to identify development sites and to undertake the necessary steps to enhance site readiness by ensuring the appropriate zoning, permitting, and land assembly.

Competitiveness

Best Practice: There is evidence of the continuous use of performance measures for the evaluation of how competitive the community is compared to other communities in terms of attractiveness for commercial development, and housing expansion.

Job Creation and Retention

Best Practice: There is a documented economic development plan which leverages local economic sector strengths, regional assets, encourages innovation and entrepreneurship, and demonstrates collaboration with educational institutions for the development of a workforce plan.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY Best Practices

Cyber Security

Best Practice: There is a documented cyber-security strategy, including policies, procedures and controls aligned with an industry standard security framework.

Transparency

Best Practice: There is a documented open data strategy including timelines for making municipal spending and budget information accessible from the city or town website in a machine readable and graphical format.

Business Continuity

Best Practice: There is a written disaster recovery and backup plan for critical municipal systems along with a documented plan to transfer paper documents to an electronic format and securely store backup electronic municipal data in locations geographically separated from the primary source.

Citizen Engagement

Best Practice: There is a documented citizen engagement strategy for deployment of technology solutions, including a public communication strategy and a professional development strategy to ensure that internal resources can effectively engage with users via technology.

Data Standards

Best Practice: There is a documented plan to implement generally accepted data standards in use at the national or regional-level to promote system interoperability, local data analysis and regional data analysis.

REGIONALIZATION/SHARED SERVICES Best Practices

Best Practice: In an era of shrinking budgets, loss of seasoned employees to retirement, and increased need for service improvements, productive partnerships between municipalities make sense for some communities. This best practices encourages regionalization of some services and sharing resources among municipalities. Technical assistance is available to help your community and potential municipal partners determine if regionalizing is the path to take.

TRANSPORTATION AND CITIZENS SAFETY Best Practices

Complete Streets

Best Practice: Complete Streets policies and programs provide accommodations for all users and modes, create safer and more livable neighborhoods, and encourage healthy transportation alternatives. The municipality will become certified through MassDOT and demonstrate the regular and routine inclusion of complete streets design elements and infrastructure on locally-funded roads.

Safe Routes to School

Best Practice: The community will show evidence of a comprehensive safe routes to school program which includes the prioritization of snow removal around schools and routes to schools as well as snow removal from bus stops, clearly marked crosswalks, safe sidewalks, safe student pick-up/drop-off areas free from congestion. The program will also include student education on pedestrian safety such as taking care in walking past driveways and through a parking lot, using cross walks, and crossing with a crossing guard.

A Safe and Mobile Future for Older Drivers

Best Practice: There is a documented plan to address the anticipated increase in older drivers in the years to come. The plan will include a goal for reducing crashes involving older drivers over the next five years, identification of the issues surrounding older driver mobility, including infrastructure improvements, education for older road users and the public with topics to include insurance and liability concerns, and medically impaired drivers, as well as identify and promote transportation options for older adults in the community.

Sharing Best Practices

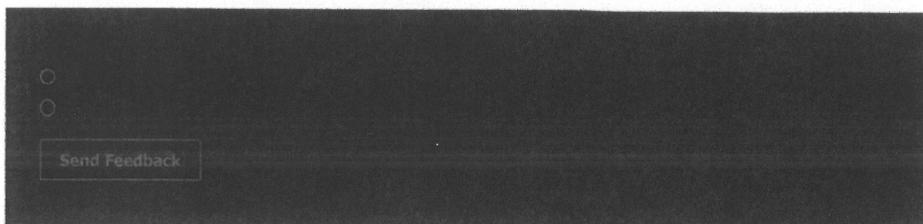
Best Practice: Municipal Public Works Departments and Highway Departments can learn from each other and share best practices about technologies and operating, maintaining and managing the assets and departments for which they are responsible. Participation in the Baystate Roads Program (BSR) is a demonstration of implementing this best practice. The Baystate Roads Program is a federally and state funded program that provides and facilitates the sharing of state of the art planning, design, and operational information for city and town public works managers.

Citizen Safety

Best Practice: There are documented community-based programs to increase, pedestrian safety and motorcycle safety, and promote awareness of the use of seatbelts and child seats, the dangers of texting and distracted driving, the dangers of speeding and aggressive driving, and the dangers of driving while impaired. The community will demonstrate participation in the Commonwealth's Office of Public Safety and Security's trainings and conferences as well as the dissemination of public safety information to citizens.

Timely Traffic Citation Submissions and Public Safety

Best Practice: There are documented standards processes that when applied by police departments will improve the timely submission of Civil Motor Vehicle Infraction (CMVI) traffic citations. Timely submissions of traffic citations increases public safety by keeping dangerous drivers off the roads; allows faster distribution of funds to cities and towns and allows for timely addition of citations to violators driving records.



BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

1 FENN STREET, SUITE 201, PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS 01201

TELEPHONE (413) 442-1521 • FAX (413) 442-1523

www.berkshireplanning.org

SHEILA IRVIN, Chair
KYLE HANLON, Vice-Chair
MARIE RAFTERY, Clerk
CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

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

MEMORANDUM

TO: Delegates and Alternates, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
FROM: Nathaniel W. Karns, AICP, Executive Director
DATE: March 14, 2016
SUBJ: Consideration of Limited Comments on the State Budget as Proposed by the Governor

We have become aware of several budget items which have some significance to priority issues in the Berkshires which we believe may warrant some comment to the House and Senate Ways and Means Committee Chairs, the House Speaker and Senate President, and the Berkshire delegation. These are absolutely not a complete list of potential issues with the Governor's budget proposal but strike particularly in areas in which BRPC has ongoing regional involvement. We will raise the issue of the level of funding for the District Local Technical Assistance program in a separate letter as that has become an annual "event" for us.

Draft text of letter:

RE: FY 2017 Budget Proposed by the Governor in H.2

Dear _____:

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission wishes to express its concern with several items, important certainly to the Berkshires but of state-wide concern, as proposed in Governor Baker's budget request for FY 2017.

Funding Level of Public Transit Outside the MBTA System

We believe that the funding proposed to regional public transportation, exclusive of the MBTA system, is inequitable and inadequate. The Governor's budget reduces funding for public transportation, outside the MBTA system, by \$2.0 million. Public transportation serving Berkshire County is already unacceptably inadequate, with very limited hours of operation during the week, limited Saturday and no Sunday service, and one hour bus headways, system-wide. This works against our workforce needs as we have an increasingly service-based economy with many workers, particularly in health care and hospitality, needing evening, early morning, and weekend service. The lack of even a reasonable level of public transportation is constantly raised in the community as it affects almost every topic, including education, child care, employment, access to health services, and recreation. The funding for public transportation outside the MBTA system has consistently been short-changed and it should be increased from current levels, substantially if possible, not decreased.

Funding for Environmental Protection and Conservation Agencies

H.2 cuts funding for the various environmental agencies by \$16 million (\$215 million compared to \$231 million in the FY16 budget). And while the \$39.6 billion proposed budget reflects a 3.5% increase over last year's state budget, spending on environmental agencies drops by 7%. This budget reflects a significant reduction in staff at the Mass Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) resulting from early retirements. That is added to previous budget cuts resulting in MassDEP and DCR losing 30% of their staff since FY08.

Given the importance of the state forests and parks in the Berkshires to our economy and communities, and the very obvious lack of routine maintenance and enforcement in the forests and parks, not to mention the chronically underfunded capital needs for DCR, funding for DCR needs to be on a continued upward trajectory, not being subjected to continual decreases. Similarly, given critical major environmental protection needs, such as the clean-up of the Housatonic River and the pressures to build major new natural gas transmission lines which will required significant support from MassDEP in order to protect our communities, the severe cuts in personnel at DEP are a threat to our valuable environment. The primary reason people cite for why they visit the Berkshires are the natural environment here. The budget, as proposed by the Governor, does not adequately protect that environment.

Recapitalization of MassDevelopment's Brownfields Funding

The Berkshires contains over one thousand contaminated sites. MassDevelopment's brownfields fund is a primary mechanism to return those sites to productive use. There is no funding left in that fund since it was last recapitalized two years ago. The Governor's budget does not include funding for the brownfields fund, although his proposed Economic Development effort does providing \$75 million over the next five years, funded through issuance of bonds. Recapitalization through appropriations from the Commonwealth's General Fund would be preferable as it would provide more flexibility and an increased ability to recycle funds by making loans whenever a project would support a loan rather than a grant. Bond authorizations also are not always funded in the annual capital budget, and come with more restrictions such as the inability to capitalize loans and revolve the funding. Providing \$15 million in funding each year though the appropriations process would be a preferred mechanism to relying on bond funding.

There are certainly other budget items which deserve close scrutiny and our comments are not intended to cover many of these other legitimate needs. However, these are three areas of the budget which are important to priorities in the Berkshires that we hope will be given further resources as the House and Senate develop the FY 2017 budget for the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
1 FENN STREET, SUITE 201, PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS 01201
TELEPHONE (413) 442-1521 • FAX (413) 442-1523
www.berkshireplanning.org

SHEILA IRVIN, Chair
KYLE HANLON, Vice-Chair
MARIE RAFTERY, Clerk
CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

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

MEMORANDUM

TO: Delegates and Alternates, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
FROM: Nathaniel W. Karns, AICP, Executive Director
DATE: March 11, 2016
SUBJ: Approval of Executive Committee Actions

In accordance with the bylaws, all actions taken by the Executive Committee on the Commission's behalf must be endorsed at the next Commission meeting.

The Executive Committee took the following actions at its February 4, 2016 meeting:

- **Approved the Executive Director on behalf of the Commission to Submit a Grant Application to the Mass. Department of Environmental Protection for EPA 604b Water Quality Assessment Grant**

Approval was requested for the Executive Director to be authorized to submit a grant application to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection for an EPA Section 604b Water Quality Assessment Grant and to approve any resulting contracts and agreements. At the time of the Executive meeting it was requested for the approval from the Executive Committee to apply for this grant without a firm idea of what will be applied for. The grant is due later in March but we wanted to get this step out of the way. There is no match required.

- **Approved the Executive Director on behalf of the Commission to Submit a Grant Application to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for Drug Free Communities Program**

Approval was requested for the Executive Director to be authorized to submit a grant application to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for the Drug Free Communities Program and to approve any resulting contracts and agreements. The grant is intended to strengthen collaborations to support the efforts of community coalitions working to prevent youth substance abuse. A match is required but it can be in-kind and there are multiple existing sources of in-kind match.

Due to a lack of a quorum, the Executive Committee meeting scheduled for March 3rd was not held and no actions were taken.

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
1 FENN STREET, SUITE 201, PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS 01201
TELEPHONE (413) 442-1521 · FAX (413) 442-1523
Massachusetts Relay Service: TTY: 771 or 1-800-439-2370
www.berkshireplanning.org

SHEILA IRVIN, Chair
KYLE HANLON, Vice-Chair
MARIE RAFTERY, Clerk
CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

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

MEMORANDUM

TO: Delegates and Alternates
FROM: Nathaniel W. Karns, AICP, Executive Director
DATE: March 14, 2016
SUBJ: Executive Director's Report

There are a number of items to bring to your attention.

- A. Presentation on the Renewable Wood Heat Sustainable Supply for the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership Project – Thursday, March 24th, Franklin Regional Council of Governments, Greenfield
- Attached is an announcement of a presentation on a study of the supply of renewable wood for expanding the use of energy efficient renewable wood heating systems and the feasibility of establishing a wood pellet manufacturing facility to support demand for this wood heat in the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership area, which includes a number of Franklin County towns as well as ten Berkshire municipalities (Adams, Cheshire, Clarksburg, Florida, New Ashford, North Adams, Peru, Savoy, Williamstown, Windsor). For further information, contact Assistant Director Tom Matuszko at tmatuszko@berkshireplanning.org or 442-1521, ext. 34.
- B. Berkshire Conservation Commission Coalition Meeting – Tuesday, March 29th, BRPC
- Attached is an announcement of a meeting of the Berkshire Conservation Commission Coalition. For further information, contact Senior Planner Lauren Gaherty at lgaherty@berkshireplanning.org or 442-1521, ext. 35.
- C. 5th Thursday Dinner for Planning & Zoning Boards – March 31st, Mazzeo's Ristorante, Pittsfield
- The next 5th Thursday Dinner will be on March 31st. The topic will be Complete Streets, with an emphasis on the design aspects of what is entailed and the dinner will be at Mazzeo's on South Street in Pittsfield. The invitation is attached and registration must be complete by March 24th. For further information, contact Senior Planner Brian Domina at bdomina@berkshireplanning.org or 442-1521, ext. 14.
- D. Aging in Place Public Forums – March 31st & April 1st
- Public forums are scheduled in Pittsfield, Great Barrington and Adams on March 31st and April 1st to get input on what ideas seniors concerning what they need to continue to live in their homes. As you may recall, the Older Adults survey last year resulted in a resounding response that most people would prefer to remain in their homes as they age but face some impediments in being able to do so. These forums are intended to develop more detailed information regarding those impediments in order to see if there are some ways that they can be managed or overcome. A

flyer for the forums is attached. For further information, contact Associate Planner Allison Hope at ahope@berkshireplanning.org or 442-1521, ext. 37.

E. 2017 State Budget and District Local Technical Assistance Funding

The Governor's proposed 2017 budget has been released with a recommended funding level of \$2.0 million for District Local Technical Assistance funding to the regional planning agencies, a decrease of \$800,000 (29% decrease). This is on budget line item 1599-0026. This is the same amount as was in the Governor's proposed budget last year, which the General Court increased back to the historic \$2.8 million level in the final budget which was approved. The decrease proposed is in the face of a substantial increase in request for DLTA services from our towns and cities, much of which is driven by the new Community Compact program. The Administration is recommending that municipalities seek DLTA assistance for many of their Community Compact commitments so decreasing the funding for DLTA runs counter to their desire to see Community Compact initiatives.

In BRPC's case, we received 28 valid applications this year, as opposed to 24 last year. Most of the regions are reporting increased applications as well. Even last year we were unable to meet several requests and expect this year will be even worse. We therefore are working with the other regions to advocate for an increase in the funding available in FY 2017 to \$3.4 million from the existing \$2.8 million. The \$2.8 million has been steady for the past three years.

We request that local officials reach out to their State Representatives and seek their support to actually increase the funding available to \$3.4 million in this year's budget. The House will be working on its version of the budget over the next month and now is the time to seek our delegation's support. You should copy House Speaker DeLeo and House Ways and Means Committee Chair Brian Dempsey on any requests to your State Representative.

F. Berkshires Tomorrow and Amazon Smile

As many of you are aware, BRPC has a companion 501(c)3 organization, Berkshires Tomorrow, Inc. We primarily use this for projects involving funding from foundations which typically will not provide funding to units of government and require that funding be to a non-profit. Very recently we discovered that Amazon has a charitable arm, Amazon Smile, which donates half of a percent of every purchase to a charity of the purchaser's choice. We have attached a brief write-up on this and request that you consider designating Berkshires Tomorrow, Inc. as your supported charity. This would be very helpful to BRPC in continuing to support our educational efforts focused on municipal officials across the region. For further information, please contact Office Manager Marianne Sniezek at msniezek@berkshireplanning.org or 442-1521, ext. 13, or GIS, Data and IT Manager Mark Maloy at mmaloy@berkshireplanning.org or ext. 29.

G. MassDOT Complete Streets Application Opened

MassDOT has released the application for funding under the Complete Streets program. A copy of their announcement is attached. A majority of Berkshire communities have met the first requirement which is to have a municipal representative attend a complete streets workshop (2 have been held in the Berkshires). The next step is for the municipality to adopt a Complete Streets policy (see the next agenda item). For further assistance and information, contact Senior Planner Emily Lindsey at elindsey@berkshireplanning.org or 442-1521, ext. 12, or Planner Eammon Coughlin at ecoughlin@berkshireplanning.org, 442-1521, ext. 19.

H. Complete Streets Policy Template Available on BRPC Website

BRPC has developed a draft Complete Streets Policy template to assist communities in their efforts to enter into MassDOT's program. The draft policy template was developed based on MassDOT's draft guidance materials and, as presented, is considered robust. This document is intended to serve as a starting point for communities and is intended to be modified in order to meet a municipality's specific needs and desires. A copy of Complete Streets Policy is available on BRPC's website at <http://www.berkshireplanning.org/events/announcements/draft-complete->

[streets-policy-template](#). Should you have any questions or need assistance, please contact Emily Lindsey at elindsey@berkshireplanning.org or 442-1521, ext. 12.

I. MassDOT Project to Renumber Interstate Exits

The Federal Highway Administration has mandated that exit numbers on the interstate highway system (in our case, the MassPike/I-90) be renumbered to match mile markers. Therefore, MassDOT put a project out to bid last March (2015) to renumber all the MassPike exits from West Stockbridge to Auburn. Under this plan, Exit 1 will become Exit 3 and Exit 2 will become Exit 11, etc. Other guide signs and traffic signs along the Pike which are worn out or no longer serviceable will also be replaced as part of this project. The contractor doing the work is Roadsafe Traffic Systems and a notice to proceed was issued last October. They have until October 2017 to finish the work. The entire project cost is about \$7 million. For further information, contact Transportation Program Manager Clete Kus at kkus@berkshireplanning.org or 442-1521, ext. 20.

J. Status of Final Decision by EPA on Clean-up of PCBs from the Housatonic River

As you may have been following in the local media, the decisions about the clean-up of the Housatonic River appear to be reaching a milestone in this complicated and lengthy process. The legal consent decree laid out a process which involved EPA presenting its proposed clean-up to GE, who then could first enter into informal discussion, then formal mediation, and then formal response. EPA then could respond to GE's formal response, and then GE has the opportunity to respond to EPA's response. The timeframe for completion of all those steps will be completed later in March. The next step is that a designated person at EPA Region 1 (Boston) considers the various arguments and reaches a conclusion about the disputed points. The primary issues are:

- 1) EPA is requiring that the hazardous waste be shipped to a licensed out-of-state hazardous waste landfill. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts strongly backs EPA. GE wants to create an entirely new permanent landfill in Berkshire County for this waste, saving GE an estimated \$250 million.
- 2) EPA is requiring that Woods Pond, where 25% of the PCBs are concentrated, be dredged to a depth of at least six feet and the material be removed to a landfill as discussed above. Massachusetts has been strongly advocating for this dredging. GE simply wants to cap Woods Pond and leave the contamination under the cap. They are estimating the dredging, with disposal of the dredged material, will cost them about \$125 million.
- 3) EPA is requiring that GE remain "on the hook" for all remaining contamination, basically in perpetuity. GE wants to undertake the work that EPA requires now and then be held harmless from any further PCB removal or containment that may be found to be needed at a later date.

Once the decision is finalized at EPA Region 1, it seems apparent that GE will continue to appeal if the decisions on these three primary points (and probably some others) are not in their favor. The first line of further appeal is to the Environmental Appeals Board at EPA in Washington. Subsequently, they can appeal to the Federal Court of Appeals. Other parties who are dissatisfied with some or all of the EPA permit also have the rights to appeal to the Environmental Appeals Board and then to the Court of Appeals.

Attachments: (6)

Invitation to Presentation on the Renewable Wood Heat Sustainable Supply for the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership Project
Meeting of the Berkshire Conservation Commission Coalition
5th Thursday Dinner "Designing for Complete Streets"
Aging in Place Open Forum
Amazon Smile and Berkshires Tomorrow
Announcing New Complete Streets Funding Program

INVITATION

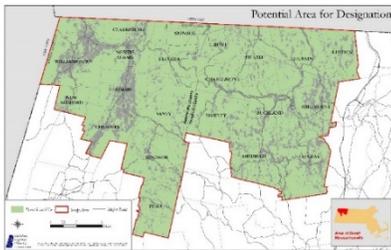
Presentation on the Renewable Wood Heat Sustainable Supply for the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership Project

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Delegates and Alternates are invited to a presentation by Charles Levesque, President of Innovative Natural Resource Solutions on the renewable wood heat sustainable supply for an effort to expand the use of energy efficient renewable wood heating systems in the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership Area. See the attached meeting agenda for details.

BACKGROUND

The Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership (MTWP) is an effort to bring recognition and additional financial and technical resources to the 21 municipalities in northwestern Massachusetts, primarily via special designation by the U.S. Forest Service and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to:

- Increase economic development related to forestry and natural resource based tourism
- Support the expansion of sustainable forestry practices and forest conservation on private lands
- Improve fiscal stability and sustainability of the municipalities



The study area includes 21 municipalities in northwestern Massachusetts: Cheshire, Clarksburg, Florida, New Ashford, North Adams, Peru (added October 2015), Savoy, Williamstown and Windsor in Berkshire County, and Ashfield, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Conway, Hawley, Heath, Leyden, Monroe, Rowe, and Shelburne in Franklin County.

As part of the MTWP effort, the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) is conducting a \$350,000 feasibility study to evaluate the potential for expanding the use of energy efficient renewable wood heating systems and the feasibility of establishing a wood pellet manufacturing facility to support demand for this wood heat in the study area.

The feasibility study contains five parts:

1. Resource Assessment: A Resource Assessment will be conducted to estimate the amount of low grade wood that could be sustainably harvested in the 21-town area for schools, municipal buildings, homes and businesses.
2. Market Analysis: A Market analysis of the demand in the 21-town region for wood heat will be conducted for schools, municipal buildings, home and businesses.
3. Energy and Climate Evaluation: An evaluation of the reduction in fossil fuel use, reduction of Green House Gas and the potential air quality impacts of increased use of wood heat will be done.
4. Business Plan: A business plan will be created for the development of wood pellet plant somewhere in this region. A private ownership model and a community owned model, such as a cooperative will be evaluated.
5. Regional Economic Impact Study: A regional economic impact will be done to examine the economic impact of a wood processing distribution center in the region, for instance on foresters, truckers, etc.



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Franklin Regional Planning Board

Meeting:		
Date: March 24, 2016*	Location: J. W. Olver Transit Center, 12 Olive Street, Greenfield	Facilitator(s): Jerry Lund, Chair
Time: 6:00-8:00 p.m.	Room: 1 st Floor Conference Room	Call in # PIN N/A
ATTENDEES: Franklin Regional Planning Board Members	GUESTS: C. Levesque, R. Rizzo	REGRETS:
STAFF: P. Sloan, K. MacPhee & R. Boyd -Owens		

Agenda items	Estimated Time	Key Person
1. Introductions	6:00 p.m.	J. Lund, Chair -FRPB & FRPB Members
2. Review and Approval of January 28, 2016 FRPB Minutes	6:05 p.m.	J. Rockwell, Clerk – FRPB
3. Presentation on the South River Watershed Project	6:10 p.m.	K. MacPhee, Natural Resources & Program Manager - FRCOG
4. Presentation on the Renewable Wood Heat Sustainable Supply Study for the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership Project	6:50 p.m.	C. Levesque, President Innovative Natural Resource Solutions & R. Rizzo, MA DOER
5. Update on FERC Relicensing of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Facility	7:30 p.m.	T. Miner, Chair - CRSEC/ 2 nd Vice Chair - FRPB
6. Update on the Proposed Kinder Morgan/TGP Pipeline Project	7:40 p.m.	P. Sloan, Planning Director - FRCOG
7. Other Topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of the meeting/Adjourn	7:50 p.m.	J. Lund, Chair - FRPB

Parking at the Transit Center: Limited FRCOG guest parking is available in the lot above the Transit Center (behind the brick building with the Loft Apartments sign). Visitor spots (#s 23, 24 and 25) are designated with signs. Otherwise, “pay to park” lots are on Hope Street at the end of Olive Street and on Olive Street across from the Transit Center. Daytime meeting attendees may not use the short term parking in the Transit Center parking lot unless they require handicapped spaces. After 5:30 p.m. evening meeting attendees may use the parking in the Transit Center parking lot.

***In the event of snow or icy weather please call 413-774-3167 x133 after 2:00 p.m. to learn if the meeting has been cancelled.**

This meeting is wheelchair accessible. Please call the facilitator with any requests for accessibility.



MEETING OF THE BERKSHIRE CONSERVATION COMMISSION COALITION

Tuesday, March 29, 2016
6:30 – 8:00 pm

Held at Berkshire Regional Planning Commission office
1 Fenn Street, Suite 201, Pittsfield, MA



Leap into spring by attending the Berkshire Conservation Commission Coalition’s second meeting of 2016.

Our meetings provide a forum for Commissioners to network and share war stories – both successes and setbacks.

- ✓ Got a question or problem that you’d like to pose to fellow Commissioners? Bring it along!
- ✓ Got a topic that you’re burning to know more about? Tell us about it and we’ll try to find a speaker!
- ✓ Invite fellow Commissioners to attend. Create a carpool group.

Pizza provided - please RSVP if you plan on attending.

RSVP Lauren Gaherty at lgaherty@berkshireplanning.org

Free parking is available in the First Street lot across from Pittsfield Common.

~~~~~

*The Berkshire Conservation Commission Coalition has been formed to aid and support Berkshire County Commissioners as they administer the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and shoulder other responsibilities.*

# 5TH THURSDAY DINNER

## “DESIGNING FOR COMPLETE STREETS”

**MAZZEOS RISTORANTE**  
**MARCH 31, 2016**

**5:30 TO 6:30 - SOCIAL HOUR**  
**6:30 TO 8:30 - DINNER & SPEAKER**



Please join BRPC for dinner and a presentation on the design aspects of Complete Streets. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is continuing its effort to promote healthy living through community design. MassDOT recently launched its Complete Streets Funding Program that provides municipalities with financial incentives to adopt Complete Streets policies and to implement Complete Streets projects. Now is the perfect time to come learn more about Complete Streets and Complete Streets design.

We are pleased to welcome Mr. Thomas Tavella, a senior landscape architect with Alta Planning + Design as the presenter for the evening. Mr. Tavella has more than 26 years of experience in land use planning, landscape architecture and urban design. Mr. Tavella is a strong advocate of establishing health communities by design and he has spoken nationally and internationally on the topic.

*For additional details, cost information and to RSVP please see the attached return sheet*

**5<sup>th</sup> Thursday Dinner – March 31, 2016**  
**“Designing for Complete Streets”**

*Please remit payment to BRPC, 1 Fenn Street, Suite 201, Pittsfield, MA 01201 prior to the event*

**Name of Municipality:** \_\_\_\_\_

**# of Attendees:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Amount Enclosed:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide the following information for each attendee:

| NAME | MUNICIPAL POSITION | E-MAIL |
|------|--------------------|--------|
|      |                    |        |
|      |                    |        |
|      |                    |        |
|      |                    |        |
|      |                    |        |
|      |                    |        |
|      |                    |        |
|      |                    |        |

\*\*\*\*\*

**Location & Menu**

**Mazzeos Ristorante | South Street | Pittsfield, MA 01201**

Please join us for a buffet dinner consisting of the following:

- Tossed Salad & Rolls***
- Seasonal Vegetables***
- Roasted Red Potatoes***
- Eggplant Parmigiana***
- Chicken Marsala***
- Roasted Top Round***
- Chocolate Bomb***

*\* Please note on this form if you have special dietary restrictions and we will do our best to accommodate your needs*

\*\*\*\*\*

**Cost Information**

**\$33.00 for Municipal Officials, Municipal Board Members & Guests**

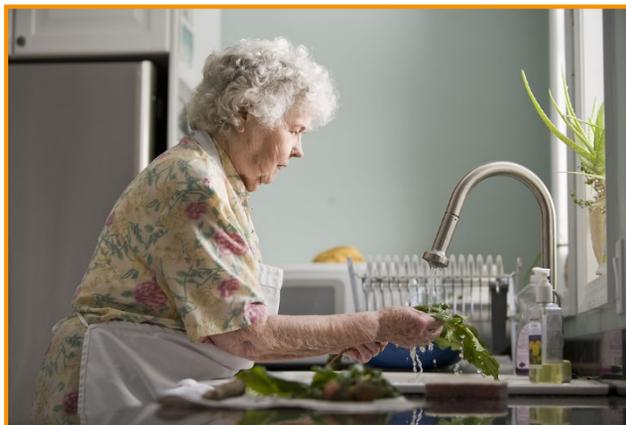
Reservations **must** be received by: **March 24, 2016** - Late reservations will not be accepted  
*Cancellations received after March 24, 2016 are non-refundable.*

**Please RSPV to Linda Ludwig: [lludwig@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:lludwig@berkshireplanning.org).**

Questions to Brian Domina: [bdomina@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:bdomina@berkshireplanning.org) or (413) 442-1521 ext.14

A recent survey in Berkshire County found that 98% of older adults thought it was important to age independently in their own homes.

## Aging in Place Open Forum



Discuss barriers to aging in your home and community and potential solutions!

Offer suggestions and tips to help create a regional action plan for aging!

Learn about other efforts to support older adults in the Berkshires!

**We are here to listen – tell us what you think!**

**Who Should Attend?** Anyone interested in aging in place

**When and Where?**

**Pittsfield: Thursday, March 31<sup>st</sup>, 9:30-11:30am  
Froio Senior Center, 330 North St**

**Adams: Thursday, March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1:30-3:30pm  
Visitor's Center, 3 Hoosac St**

**Great Barrington: Friday, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 10:00am-12 Noon  
Berkshire South, 15 Crissey Rd**

Hosted by Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and Age Friendly Berkshires

For more information contact Allison Hope  
[ahope@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:ahope@berkshireplanning.org)  
413-442-1521 x37



## Amazon Smile and Berkshires Tomorrow



Amazon has a charitable arm called Smile, which donates 0.5% of every purchase made to a charity of your choice. Berkshires Tomorrow Inc. is setup to receive donations through Amazon Smile. To use Amazon Smile, go to: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/03-0572303>. Enter your Amazon username and password and your account will then be set to donate to Berkshires Tomorrow.

Whenever you shop through Amazon, go to <https://smile.amazon.com> first and then 0.5% of any purchase you make will go to Berkshires Tomorrow. You will see in orange "Supporting:" with the name of the charity you support. If you ever decide to change your charity, select the drop down triangle after the charity, you can select Change your charity.

*Berkshires Tomorrow Inc. is organized exclusively for charitable, educational, and scientific purposes including, without limitation, improving and enhancing the quality of education and learning opportunities for the general public and local officials, and planning and integrating innovative methods and technologies into regional and local education and governance, in Berkshire County, Massachusetts.*

# Announcing New Complete Streets Funding Program

The new Complete Streets Funding Program, authorized by the 2014 Transportation Bond Bill, offers Massachusetts municipalities incentives to adopt policies and practices that provide safe and accessible options for all travel modes – walking, biking, transit and vehicles – for people of all ages and abilities.

## Online Portal

MassDOT has launched an interactive web portal to assist municipalities through the policy development, prioritization planning, and project approval steps of the application process. In addition, a Complete Streets Funding Program Guidance document, explaining the program requirements, model policy guidance and scoring system, and eligible infrastructure, is available online.

## Primary Requirements

To be eligible for up to \$50,000 in technical assistance and up to \$400,000 in construction funding, a municipality must meet three primary requirements:

- Attendance of a municipal employee at a Complete Streets training
- Passage of a Complete Streets Policy that scores 80 or above out of a possible 100 points (Tier 1)
- Development of a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan (Tier 2)

MassDOT offers technical assistance to conduct a needs assessment, network gap analysis, and/or safety audit to determine a targeted investment strategy for Complete Streets infrastructure. Upon completion of these requirements, a municipality is eligible for construction funds (Tier 3). Reim-

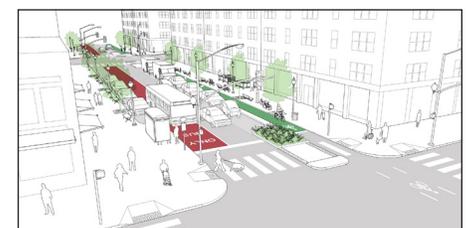
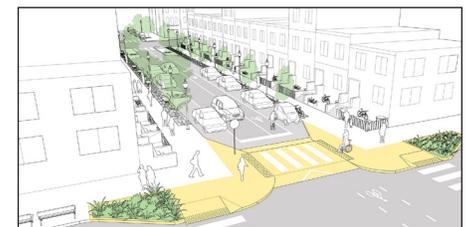
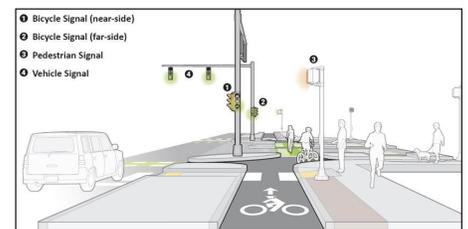


bursment for technical assistance and project funding will be managed by the appropriate Highway District Local Aid Office.

**Available Funding:** \$12.5M total for FY16 and FY17 (must be spent by June 30, 2017).

## Community Compact Cabinet

Four points will be added automatically to the policy scores of all Community Compact Cabinet members, and any Community Compact member that has selected Complete Streets as one of its best practices will receive an additional four points.



For more information and to register to become a Complete Streets Eligible municipality go to [www.mass.gov/massdot/completestreets](http://www.mass.gov/massdot/completestreets).

**massDOT**  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation