

COMMON GROUND

A NEWSLETTER FOR COMMUNITY PLANNING IN THE BERKSHIRE REGION

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Berkshires Awarded \$1.1M in EPA Brownfields Grants

Four separate grants have been awarded to recipients within Berkshire County to conduct community-wide environmental assessments and to clean up a North County Brownfield site. BRPC is the recipient of a \$300,000 award for regional assessment. Known and suspected Brownfields include former textile mills and paper mills, auto shops, fueling stations, dry cleaners and rail lines among others. Many of these sites are contaminated with chlorinated solvents, petroleum products, PCBs, and heavy metals. The Town of Great Barrington and the City of North Adams were also awarded \$300,000 each for community-wide assessments. BRPC anticipates working with both Great Barrington and North Adams to assist in the management of these grants.

Great Barrington Brownfield Assessment Grant

The Town of Great Barrington has received a \$300,000 grant award from the U.S. EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant Program. The funding will target the Village of Housatonic. The core of the target area is the Monument Mills cluster along the Housatonic River and its surrounding residential neighborhoods along with the former Housatonic School. Five priority brownfields sites have been identified within the Target Area: former textile mills (Monument Mills), a former paper mill (Rising Mill), a former auto garage (Cook's Garage), a former lumber yard (Barbieri Lumber), and a former school (Housatonic School). Contaminants identified and/or suspected at these sites include petroleum of varying grades, chlorinated solvents, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, PCBs, heavy metals, lead and asbestos in soil, groundwater and/or in building materials.



Image (above): (iBerkshires) JB Paper Co Factory—A Potential Site for Assessment

North Adams Brownfield Assessment Grant

The City of North Adams has received a \$300,000 grant award from the U.S. EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant Program for a community-wide assessment. The Target Area is the Route 2/Mohawk Trail Corridor, specifically a 1 mile stretch of commercial/industrial development between the eastern gateway and the downtown. Much of this area was developed in the 1800s through the 1940s. The core of the Target Area is a former textile mill (Delftree) which was originally part of the Eclipse Mills and a former factory (Barber Leather).

Photech Brownfield Cleanup Grant

The Town of Williamstown has received a \$200,000 grant award from the U.S. EPA Brownfields to remediate contamination at the Photech Mill in Williamstown. Hazardous substances grant funds will be used to clean up the nearly five-acre former Photech Imaging Systems property at 330 Cole Avenue. The now vacant property was initially developed in 1865 as a textile mill known as the Williamstown Mill and was later used by photographic paper and film manufacturing companies until 1989. The site is contaminated with polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, heavy metals, and inorganic contaminants. Grant funds also will be used for air monitoring and community engagement activities.

For more information, contact Brownfield Program Manager Melissa Provencher (MProvencher@berkshireplanning.org or x 22).

BOAPC

Berkshire Opioid Abuse Prevention Collaborative

Berkshire Opioid Abuse Prevention Collaborative

The fourth year of the Berkshire Opioid Abuse Prevention Collaborative (BOAPC) has been a busy and successful one, with BOAPC and its partners making measurable headway with evidence-based community interventions to address the public health crisis of opioid misuse and opioid overdose.

Current BOAPC strategies include educating Berkshire County residents about the risks associated with opioid use; working with pharmacies to integrate information about partial filling of opioid prescriptions, tapering of opioids, the dangers of mixing prescriptions and alcohol into their regular day-to-day prescribing practices; supporting additional training of physicians and other health providers regarding pain management and appropriate prescribing and alternative methods for pain control; increasing access to safe storage and disposal of prescription medications; increasing naloxone (Narcan) availability and increased capacity to administer naloxone; strengthening post-overdose interventions and linkages to services and/or treatment; and support of syringe access and other harm reduction practices.

BOAPC continues to build awareness about the opioid epidemic, strengthen its community partnerships (and forge new ones), build capacity, and plan strategically for future sustainability. It is only through these coordinated community efforts that we will be able to affect positive change to address opioid-related issues in Berkshire County, and to be prepared for future public health challenges related to substance use.

The work of Berkshire Opioid Abuse Prevention Collaborative is positively regarded in Berkshire County, and has been recognized at the state level. By leveraging this positive regard and our related successes, in FY 17 BOAPC successfully applied for and received additional funding from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health/Bureau of Substance Abuse Services and the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation to further support and broaden the essential work being done in Berkshire County. This additional funding has enabled the coalition and its partners to increase the capacity to address opioid-related issues during this public health crisis and has enabled BOAPC to:

- Establish the Central County RX/Heroin Work Group and complete a year's worth of programming, with experienced, knowledgeable speakers on a variety of topics (open to professionals and the public)
- Solidify its position as a vital community resource to provide information about the opioid epidemic
- Create several targeted, effective materials that address various aspects of the opioid epidemic, from opioid prescribing to disposal, accessing recovery and support services, and naloxone access and administration
- Provide six free, county-wide naloxone/CPR classes to the public
- Develop and provide free training for the public, including blood-borne pathogens, HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C training
- Provide multiple sessions of recovery-based programming such as Yoga for Recovery, Nutrition for Recovery, and Mindful Meditation classes, free to any community member in any stage of recovery from any substance
- Take advantage of training opportunities to increase local capacity to address the opioid epidemic, including training that addresses social justice issues and systemic inequities, the social determinants of health, and criminal justice reform

For a more complete list of activities, or to read more about BOAPC, please visit the BOAPC website for our complete "Year in Review" document at <http://berkshireplanning.org/initiatives/boapc>.

To join the BOAPC email list, or to become involved, contact Program Coordinator Jennifer Kimball, at jkimball@berkshireplanning.org.

#StateWithoutStigMA

Municipal Vulnerability—Preparedness Designation and Grant Program

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) recently established the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grant and designation program. This program provides a municipal designation to municipalities who complete certain requirements for community resilience in the face of climate change. Once those requirements are completed, they are designated as a "MVP Community." This designation may lead to increased standing in future funding opportunities and signifies the commitment of the municipality to building resiliency and preparing for climate change. Grants are available to communities to pay for technical assistance to complete assessments and planning to achieve this designation. Adams, Lanesborough, Monterey, and Williamstown recently received grants to assist in this designation.

For more information, contact Senior Planner Lauren Gaherty, (lgaherty@berkshireplanning.org or x35).

How to Help Update the State Bicycle Plan!

Biking is an important part of enjoying the Berkshires, whether you are biking to work in Great Barrington or visiting from out of town to ride the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail, we want to provide safe, efficient, and usable facilities. The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is currently updating the statewide Bicycle Transportation Plan and needs your input. There are two ways to provide your input:

- Take the survey and tell MassDOT what prevents you from biking today and a little bit more about where you want to bike. The survey can be accessed here: bit.ly/MABikePlan-Engage
- Draw on the map and tell MassDOT where there are barriers in your community or places that need improvement. The map can be accessed here: bit.ly/MAWikiMap

Once you've provided your input, share the links with your family and friends so MassDOT can learn more about biking in the Berkshires! They will use the input received to inform the development of the Massachusetts State Bicycle Plan.

For more information, contact Transportation Program Manager Clete Kus (ckus@berkshireplanning.org or x20).



Image (above): Ribbon Cutting at Ashuwillticook

2017 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

BRPC has completed its 2017 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and will be submitting it to the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for review and approval. In addition to seeking approval of the CEDS, BRPC is asking EDA to designate the Berkshire Region as an Economic Development District (EDD).

The CEDS is both a process and a document. 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 was prepared by BRPC staff, working closely with members of the CEDS Strategy Committee for more than a year. Once completed, the committee referred the CEDS to the BRPC Commission for their review on May 18, 2017. The Commission made some additional suggestions and comments that were incorporated into the CEDS along with public comments received and referred the CEDS to the BRPC Executive Committee. On June 1, 2017, the Executive Committee approved the CEDS for submittal to the EDA.

For more information, contact Senior Planner Bill Compton (wcompton@berkshireplanning.org or x14).

Age Friendly Berkshires Updates

Berkshire County continues to work toward becoming an Age Friendly Community, one that is livable for all ages. Developing a comprehensive three-year Action Plan has been the primary priority for the past few months. The Plan, which has strategies and action steps for all eight domains of livability, should be finalized within the next couple weeks. Meanwhile, Age Friendly Berkshires (AFB) received news in June that Berkshires Tomorrow, Inc., on behalf of AFB, had been awarded another two years of funding from the Tufts Health Plan Foundation. These funds, totaling almost \$179,000 over the two years, will allow AFB to move forward with implementation of the Action Plan as well as solidifying the structure and organization of AFB. BRPC has begun to take on the role of backbone organization for the effort, and will, in conjunction with the Task Force, the Active Agers' Advisory Council, and domain leaders continue to work toward making Berkshire County a great place to grow up and a great place to grow old. Look for notification on the Action Plan launch, as well as an exciting event in the fall.

If you would like further information about Age Friendly Berkshires, contact Laura Kittross, Public Health Program Manager, at lkittross@berkshireplanning.org.



**Thanks to Emily
Lindsey for all your
hard work as senior
transportation planner
at BRPC! We wish you
luck with all your future
endeavors!**

*Thank
you*



Cheshire Completes Master Plan

The Cheshire Planning Board recently adopted the town's first Master Plan. The Master Plan is a comprehensive document that addresses many aspects of town life, creating a strategy and clear direction for the community to implement over the next ten to fifteen years. The Master Plan had several major themes, including town finances and improving public engagement, participation, and transparency. Planning for and improving town infrastructure—such as roads, buildings, and possible future sewer was also a priority. Reinvigorating the town's village center, and promoting the town's recreational, agricultural, and cultural assets were also a major theme of the plan. Now that the plan is complete, the town will switch its focus to implementing the plan's recommendations. Cheshire is currently forming a committee that will help oversee implementation and coordinate with staff and volunteers to advance projects.

For more information, contact Senior Planner Eammon Coughlin (ECoughlin@berkshireplanning.org or x19).

CALENDAR

Be sure to check out our online calendar for updates, cancellations, recently posted events and agendas. <http://berkshireplanning.org/events/calendar/2017-07>

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July 27 - Commission Summer Meeting - 5:30pm

July 27 - Planning Board Training- 6:30pm

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2**

August 3 - BRPC Executive Committee Meeting - 4:00pm



Image (above): Tanglewood

Please consider receiving an e-newsletter—saving trees and energy costs in our region and beyond. E-mail SZaleski@berkshireplanning.org today to subscribe!