

# COMMON GROUND

A NEWSLETTER FOR COMMUNITY PLANNING IN THE BERKSHIRE REGION

## IN THIS ISSUE

### PAGE 1

- *Model Access Management Bylaws Now Available to Communities*
- *Massachusetts Rural Policy Advisory Commission*

### PAGE 2

- *Yoga and Mindfulness for Recovery*
- *New Transportation Plans Adopted*

### PAGE 3

- *Save the Date for Implementing Best Practices: A Statewide Conference for Municipal Officials and Staff*
- *Short Term Housing Rentals*
- *Becket Housing Rehabilitation Program*

### PAGE 4

- *Getting a ride has gotten a lot easier!*
- *Calendar*

## Model Access Management Bylaws Now Available to Communities

BRPC has developed two model bylaws to support access management efforts across the region. Access management is a transportation concept that helps to control the number, location, and spacing of driveways opening onto a roadway. Effective access management is an important tool to reduce congestion and increase safety by limiting the number of points where vehicles can enter and exit a roadway. Access management is most beneficial on arterial roads where larger numbers of intersections and driveways increase the number of potential conflict points between roadway users.

To support access management, BRPC has developed a model access management bylaw and a common driveway bylaw. The access management bylaw sets standards for the spacing and design of new driveways along different functional classifications of roadway (arterial, collector, local). The common driveway bylaw would allow residents to construct a shared driveway between two or more parcels and sets standards of how they can be constructed. The model bylaw also contains provisions to ensure shared maintenance by landowners. In the long term, allowing for common driveways and encouraging access management could not only enhance safety along a given roadway by limiting access points, but could also help to protect rural character, sensitive environments, and reduce the amount of impervious surface.

The model bylaws can be adopted individually or in combination. The model access management bylaw is ideal for communities looking for a strong level of regulation over siting of new driveways. The common driveway bylaw is less prescriptive, and merely gives the option for shared access drives to residents.

For more information, contact Senior Transportation Planner Eammon Coughlin ([ecoughlin@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:ecoughlin@berkshireplanning.org) or x19)

## Massachusetts Rural Policy Advisory Commission

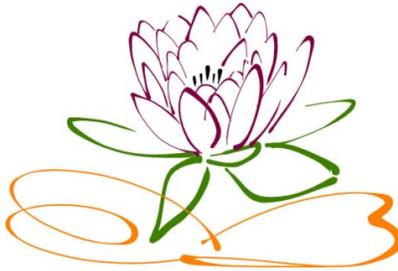
The Massachusetts Rural Policy Advisory Commission was established by state law in 2015 and began meeting late in FY 2016. Nat Karns, BRPC Executive Director, was appointed by Governor Baker as the Berkshire Regional Planning Agency's representative. The legislation defines a rural community in Massachusetts as having a population density of 500 people per square mile or less, which is 170 of the 351 towns and cities in Massachusetts. All the towns but neither of the cities in Berkshire County are rural, but even within those, populations range from 162 in Mount Washington to 8,110 in Adams.

As it began to develop a focus, the Commission analyzed a large amount of data and determined there are three general types of rural communities in Massachusetts: exurban towns experiencing growth, primarily around the I-495 belt; heavily tourist and second-home impacted towns, primarily in the southern Berkshires and Cape Cod and the Islands; and low or negative growth towns, primarily in northern Berkshire, Franklin and eastern Hampden/Hampshire and western Worcester Counties. A wide variety of data show that these three general categories of rural towns each have different issues and may require different approaches to developing appropriate policies. Over the coming year the Commission will produce policy recommendations surrounding the issues of water/sewer infrastructure, small business and job creation, and rural service delivery.

For more information contact Executive Director Nat Karn ([NKarns@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:NKarns@berkshireplanning.org), or x 26).

## Yoga and Mindfulness for Recovery

Yoga and Mindfulness for Recovery is a community-based program to support people in all stages of recovery from addiction. This Fall, Berkshire Opioid Abuse Prevention Collaborative (BOAPC) will have three new series to be held in Hinsdale, Dalton, and Windsor. This program is made possible by The Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation and Central Berkshire Fund.



Open to all in recovery and free of charge, this six-session series provides support, insight, practice and hope for people living substance-free and sober, and for those still struggling with the pull of addiction. Participants will learn practical strategies and tools to enhance sober living.

All forms of addiction, all levels of sobriety time are welcomed. Each 90-minute session will include guided meditation, gentle yoga flow, deep relaxation, and supportive instructions on living yoga “off the mat.”

The group facilitator, Aruni Nan Futuronsky, is a senior faculty member at Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health. Aruni is a mindfulness and lifestyle coach specializing in addiction and behavior change, and the developer and director of the Yoga of Recovery program (which she has taught for 25 years). She has been living in recovery for 31 years.

### **Series 1**

Hinsdale Town Hall  
39 South St, Hinsdale, MA

**Wednesdays, 1:30-3 pm**

September 6, 13, 20, 27;  
October 4, 11

### **Series 2**

United Methodist Church  
755 Main St, Dalton, MA

**Wednesdays, 1:30-3 pm**

October 18, 25;  
November 1, 8, 15, 22

### **Series 3**

Windsor Town Hall  
1890 Rt 9, Windsor, MA

**Thursdays, 12-1:30 pm**

November 2, 9, 16, **24**, 30;  
December **8 (Fridays)**

For more information or to register for Yoga and Mindfulness for Recovery, contact Emily Kirby at 413-442-1521 x28 or [ekirby@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:ekirby@berkshireplanning.org).

# BOAPC

Berkshire **Opioid Abuse Prevention** Collaborative

**#StateWithoutStigMA**

## New Transportation Plans Adopted

The Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) recently adopted the 2018 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the 2018-2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) following a public comment period. The UPWP outlines the transportation planning studies to be undertaken in the upcoming federal fiscal year and the Transportation Improvement Program identifies the projects and programs to be implemented over the next 5 years. Visit BRPC's website at <http://www.berkshireplanning.org> for more information and to view these documents.

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

## Save the Date for Implementing Best Practices: A Statewide Conference for Municipal Officials and Staff

Hosted by Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito, the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies (MARPA), and senior officials from the Executive Office of Technology Services & Security and the Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services, Implementing Best Practices is the third annual conference sponsored by Baker-Polito Administration in support of its continued commitment to local government and elevating the state-local partnership.

On Monday, September 18th at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, state and local officials will join together to share ideas and attend workshops focusing on the implementation of best practices in the areas of financial management, housing production, cybersecurity, regionalization, transportation, energy, and environment. The workshops will be followed by an interactive discussion led by the newly-formed Executive Office of Technology Services & Security (EOTSS). This forum, titled "Interactive Discussion: Data, the Commonwealth, and Unlocking Value for Municipalities," is designed to generate discussion regarding data collection and retention and the effective use of that data in both state and local policies and practices.

In the coming weeks, more information will be made available regarding registration for the September 18th conference.

For more information, contact Assistant Director Tom Matuszko (TMatuszko@berkshireplanning.org, or x 34).

## Short Term Housing Rentals

Berkshire County sponsored a well-attended public hearing on Short-Term Housing Rentals (a.k.a. AirBnB/Homeaway/VRBO) by the Legislature's Joint Committee on Financial Services in Lenox on June 5<sup>th</sup> to provide input on a fairly complicated topic which is the subject of legislation. It is clear that the Berkshires, Cape and Islands, and Boston are the most concerned about the impact of short-term rentals and the appropriate level of regulation on them. The BRPC Regional Issues Committee has taken this topic up and hopes to develop some recommendations to be submitted to the General Court this fall.

For more information contact Executive Director Nat Karn (NKarns@berkshireplanning.org, or x 26).

## Becket Housing Rehabilitation Program

BRPC is pleased to announce that applications are now being accepted for the FY17 Becket Housing Rehabilitation Program. This Program is being funded by a \$772,800 Community Development Block Grant, written and submitted on behalf of the town by BRPC, and awarded by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development.

The Becket Housing Rehabilitation Program (HRP) is managed by Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, and provides home improvement assistance in the form of 0% percent deferred payment loans for low/moderate income homeowners. The typical cost for a single rehabilitation project is \$30,000. Under the Becket Housing Rehabilitation Program, approximately 20 housing units will be rehabilitated. The type of repairs which can be undertaken using Program funds include: roofing, foundation repair, installation of energy efficient windows and doors, insulation, accessibility improvements, plumbing, electrical repair or replacement, septic, water supply, lead paint removal, exterior paint, etc.

All HRP eligible applicants must be owner-occupants whose property is located within the Town of Becket; participants must meet the minimum income requirements. BRPC continues to operate a housing rehab program in the towns of Sheffield and Great Barrington, funded by an FY16 CDBG grant.

To download an application, please visit our website at [www.berkshireplanning.org](http://www.berkshireplanning.org).

For more information, contact Community and Economic Development Program Manager Patricia Mullins (pmullins@berkshireplanning.org or x17)

**Getting a ride has gotten a lot easier!**



Free rides to health, wellness, and medical appointments are now available for those living in New Marlborough, Alford, Egremont, West Stockbridge, Clarksburg, Florida, Cheshire, Savoy, or Hinsdale. All a person has to do is call 499-0524 to schedule a ride to their appointment.

This program is Funded through a grant from the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center, awarded to Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and Age Friendly Berkshires. This is a pilot program, through 12/31/17. Rides offered by Council on Aging vans, available as capacity permits

For more information, contact , Public Health Program Manager Laura Kittross (LKittross@berkshireplanning.org or x32)



**CALENDAR**

Be sure to check out our online calendar for updates, cancellations, recently posted events and agendas. [berkshireplanning.org/events/calendar](http://berkshireplanning.org/events/calendar)

**M  
O  
N  
T  
H  
  
1**

**September 7 - BRPC Executive Committee Meeting - 4:00 pm**

**September 28 - BRPC Commission Meeting - 7:00 pm**

**M  
O  
N  
T  
H  
  
2**

**October 5 - BRPC Executive Committee Meeting - 4:00 pm**

**October 19 - BRPC Annual Dinner - Country Club of Pittsfield - 5:30 pm**



Image (above): Berkshires in the fall, Source: The Odyssey

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