

# COMMON GROUND

A NEWSLETTER FOR COMMUNITY PLANNING IN THE BERKSHIRE REGION

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## 2015 Community Innovation Challenge (CiC) Grant Program

Up to \$3 million will be made available in the fourth round of Community Innovation Challenge grants for Fiscal Year 15. Funds will be awarded to support local government innovation through regional collaborations. CiC grants provide financial support for one-time or transition costs related to innovative regionalization and other efficiency initiatives in local governments. The goal is to improve effectiveness and efficiency of services so that the Commonwealth can spend taxpayer money efficiently and to maximize the impact of every dollar spent. In addition to enabling savings, the CiC program has allowed cities and towns across the Commonwealth to continue or restore core services and increase the efficiency their operations.

Several past funded Berkshire county projects are included in the program's cadre of success stories, including the Berkshire Health Alliance Public Health Nursing Program, the Berkshire On-Line Municipal Building Permits program, Regionalizing Technology Support Services (Town of Richmond), and the Vocational/Technical School District Expansion in Northern Berkshire.

For guidance material and the application, visit the Executive Office for Administration and Finance's website: <http://www.mass.gov/anfi/>.

## BRPC Meeting on Proposed Northeast Expansion Natural Gas Pipeline

Kinder Morgan, who is proposing a major natural gas transmission line across the Berkshires, and the Conservation Law Foundation will brief the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission on the pipeline and the review process at a September 18<sup>th</sup> meeting which will be held in the Koussevitzky Auditorium at Berkshire Community College. The meeting is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. BRPC is in the initial stages of gaining more information both on the pipeline proposal and on the federal permitting process for pipelines. The meeting is open to the public but this is not a public hearing and Commission action is not expected at the meeting. For further information, contact Senior Planner Melissa Provencher at [mprovencher@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:mprovencher@berkshireplanning.org) (x 22), or Executive Director Nathaniel Karns at [nkarns@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:nkarns@berkshireplanning.org), (x 26).

## BRPC Annual Dinner

This year's annual dinner will provide an opportunity to hear about legislative priorities from our Berkshire state legislators, and provide opportunity to discuss key issues with them in a legislative round table. Join BRPC staff, commission members, and our five invited Berkshire state legislators: State Senator Ben Downing, Representative Smitty Pignatelli, Representative Tricia Farley-Bouvier, Representative Gailanne Cariddi and Representative Paul Mark on October 16 at the Pittsfield County Club. Please R.S.S.V.P. by filling out the form available on our website. We look forward so seeing you there. Dinner will be preceded by a 5:30 p.m. cocktail hour.

## Rest of River Remedy Update

As our Sustainable Berkshires long-range regional Plan notes, the cleanup of the Housatonic River to control PCB exposure is considered by many Berkshire County residents to be the single greatest issue of environmental importance for the region. The decisions being made at this time will influence the long-term ecological health of the river system and how people will be able to use the river for generations to come. The "Rest of River" being covered by this permit is approximately 138 miles in length, from the confluence of the east and west branches of the river in Pittsfield to the river's outlet in the Long Island Sound. All cleanup construction within Rest of River will occur in Berkshire County, with the vast majority of work being conducted between the confluence and Woods Pond.

The U.S. EPA has issued for public review its Draft Modification to the Reissued RCRA Permit (Draft Permit), which will dictate how GE conducts the cleanup. The Draft Permit represents a middle ground approach where much of the PCBs will be removed from the river channel, river banks, floodplain and backwaters. A fairly significant amount of PCBs will be left in place, with plans to contain them through capping and other measures. Public comments on the Draft Permit are due to EPA no later than October 1, 2014.

BRPC staff have been working with the six Berkshire County Rest of River municipalities to understand how the cleanup will affect their communities so that they can provide informed and constructive input to the EPA during this public review period. As part of this work, BRPC and the municipalities are drafting comments that they will jointly submit to the EPA by the October 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. Although the comments are still being drafted, there are a few key issues that the committee has identified:

1. Full support for the EPA's requirement that all removed contaminated sediment and floodplain soil be disposed of at an existing hazardous waste landfill (no such landfills exist in Massachusetts).
2. In none of the Draft Permit documents is there an acknowledgement that the Rest of River municipalities will suffer socioeconomic impacts due to cleanup activities.
3. The Draft Permit does not outline a process to allow for full municipal involvement and input throughout the design and construction phases of the cleanup. The Permit clearly directs the EPA to consult with the States for approvals, disapprovals or modifications of designs, plans and implementation of cleanup activities, but there is no such direction to consult the Rest of River municipalities.
4. Although the Draft Permit directs GE to work with dam owners and pay for costs related to PCBs in sediment within dam impoundments, the language needs to be strengthened to ensure that GE responds quickly to requests for action and/or financial compensation.
5. There is a concern that the Permit is not comprehensive enough for a cleanup site of this size and complexity.
6. The Draft Permit lacks clear wording declaring that GE will retain full responsibility *in perpetuity* to monitor, control and/or remove PCBs left behind after the cleanup is completed.

In addition to working with the six Rest of River municipalities, BRPC will be submitting comments of its own to the EPA Draft Permit. BRPC's comments will mirror those of the municipalities, but will likely involve additional comments regarding long-term environmental conditions and infrastructure maintenance. The BRPC will discuss Rest of River and approve comments for submission to EPA at its Special Commission Meeting on Sept. 11, 2014 at the BRPC office. Draft comments will be sent to all Delegated and Alternates, and will be available on the BRPC website. For more information, please contact Lauren Gaherty at [lgaherty@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:lgaherty@berkshireplanning.org) (x 35) or Nat Karns at [nkarns@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:nkarns@berkshireplanning.org) (x 26).

## How You Can Stay Involved

1. Visit the EPA's website at [www.epa.gov/region1/ge/thesite/restofriverreports.html](http://www.epa.gov/region1/ge/thesite/restofriverreports.html) to access the draft permit and other related documents.
2. **BRPC Delegates and Alternates: Attend BRPC's September 11 meeting to ratify draft comments to the EPA. Please share draft comments with your municipal boards.**
3. **Attend the September 23 Public Hearing for the draft permit: 6:30 p.m. @ Lenox Memorial Middle/High school.**
4. **Send comments no later than October 1, 2014 to the EPA at [r1housatonic@epa.gov](mailto:r1housatonic@epa.gov) or by mail to:**

**Dean Tagliaferro  
EPA New England, c/o Weston Solutions  
10 Lyman Street, Suite 2  
Pittsfield, MA 01201**

## Berkshire Public Health Alliance Public Health Inspector Positions

The Alliance seeks trained, experienced and certified Public Health Environmental Inspectors to provide periodic and ongoing public health and environmental health inspections and services to Alliance Member communities. Alliance Public Health Inspectors are contracted or per diem Health Agents, pre-credentialed, appointed and available to provide Alliance Member communities with services as requested. This is a part-time position that will provide back up or occasional services, with no guaranteed minimum number of hours.

**Location:** Berkshire County

**Title:** Public Health Inspector (Health Agent)

**Salary (contract):** \$20 - \$36.00 per hour, depending on credentials and experience

**Education:** Registered Sanitarian (RS) preferred; those with other public health environmental certifications\* or experience are also encouraged to apply

**Category:** Consultant, contracted service, part time

**Experience:** 2 years preferred

**Applications Period:** Ongoing

### Desirable Qualifications:

- Familiarity with Massachusetts' laws pertaining to Public Health
- Recognized certifications in areas providing public health inspections
- 1 or more years' experience in areas providing public health inspections
- Ability to perform job tasks with minimal supervision, effectively and independently.
- Excellent organizational and time management skills with the flexibility to adjust to rapidly changing schedules and frequently changing priorities.
- Ability to work well with people in a variety of community settings

\* Massachusetts Registered Sanitarian or Certification by the National Environmental Health Association: Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian (REHS/RS) and Certified Professional of Food Safety (CFP) or equivalent. Individuals with certifications for specialized technical categories such as: Title 5 Septic System Inspector (SI) or Soil Evaluator (SE), Certified Food Safety Professional (CFSP), certified pool operator (CPO), water quality evaluator, Health Homes Specialist (HHS), Lead Determination Inspector, Lead Inspector or other public health related specialties are encouraged to apply and will be strongly considered and may work under the direction of a Registered Sanitarian until the candidate can meet the requirements for Registered Sanitarian. Employment is contingent upon satisfactory Criminal Offender Record Investigation (CORI) that will be performed every two years. Review of resumes will be ongoing.

Send resume and cover letters to Jennifer Kimball at [jkimball@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:jkimball@berkshireplanning.org), or by mail at Berkshire Public Health Alliance, 1 Fenn Street, Suite 302, Pittsfield Massachusetts.

## Passenger Rail Station Analysis and Study DRAFT Available for Public Comment

BRPC released the draft Passenger Rail Station Analysis and Study Draft Report on August 15th. The thirty (30) day comment period will end on September 15, 2014. You can read the draft report at [www.berkshireplanning.org/projects/passengerrail](http://www.berkshireplanning.org/projects/passengerrail). You can request it in person at the BRPC offices at 1 Fenn Street, Suite 201 Pittsfield Massachusetts 01201, or by mail. You can also e-mail Senior Planner Brian Domina at [bdomina@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:bdomina@berkshireplanning.org). An overview of the report and preliminary findings was provided at two public meetings in July and August. Stay tuned for a meeting, date to be posted on the BRPC website.

## Tennessee Gas Pipeline Connecticut Expansion Project

In May, Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company (TGP) submitted an Expanded Environmental Notification Form for an expansion of the existing natural gas pipeline in Sandisfield, with direct impacts also in Tyringham (for a "pipeyard"). In BRPC's analysis, we raised the point that roads would be impacted by transportation of heavy equipment and materials in additional communities, definitely Monterey and Otis, but presumably others as well. TGP had requested that it be allowed to go directly to a Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR), skipping preparation of a Draft EIR. BRPC opposed TGP's request. On July 11<sup>th</sup>, the Secretary of Energy & Environmental Affairs rejected TGP's request and informed them that a full DEIR was necessary, with a lengthy scope of review as part of the MEPA certificate on the EENF. TGP has subsequently filed their Connecticut Expansion (Sandisfield/Tyringham) project with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. They have skipped the pre-filing process and have asked for expedited review. For further information, contact Senior Planner Melissa Provencher at 413-442-1521, x 22 or [mprovencher@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:mprovencher@berkshireplanning.org), or Executive Director Nathaniel Karns at x 26 or [nkarns@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:nkarns@berkshireplanning.org).

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## Great Barrington and Sheffield Receive \$803,100 in CDBG Funds

Governor Deval Patrick and our legislators visited the village of Housatonic on July 18 to announce the award of \$803,100 in FY14 CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) funds to the towns of Great Barrington and Sheffield. BRPC Senior Planner Patricia Mullins and Planner Jaelyn Pacejo assisted the two towns in applying for the grant in February. Over \$575,000 of the grant will be used to perform housing rehabilitation on low to moderate income, owner occupied dwellings in the target area of Housatonic in Great Barrington and in the Town of Sheffield. In addition, Great Barrington will receive funding for engineering of infrastructure improvements in Housatonic, and Sheffield will receive funding for architectural designs to eliminate accessibility barriers in the Sheffield Town Hall. Developing the grant application was a several month long, cooperative effort between BRPC and the towns, with Great Barrington's Town Planner, Chris Rembold, and Sheffield Select Board member Rene Wood, as well as former Sheffield Community Development Strategy team member, Martin Mitsoff, working together with BRPC to craft the application. Berkshire Regional Planning Commission will continue to assist the towns by serving as grant administrator and by managing the housing rehabilitation program. Additional information on the program will be available on the town and BRPC websites soon. For more information, please contact Senior Planner Patricia Mullins at [pmullins@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:pmullins@berkshireplanning.org) (x 17).



Governor Deval Patrick and DHCD Secretary Aaron Gorenstein were present to announce the 2014 CDBG grant awards. Great Barrington Select Board Chair Sean Stanton and Sheffield Select Board member Rene Wood provided remarks.

## CALENDAR

Be sure to check out our online calendar for recently posted events and agendas.

[berkshireplanning.org/events/calendar](http://berkshireplanning.org/events/calendar)

### SEPTEMBER

- 1: Labor Day
- 4: Executive Committee
- 11: Special Commission Meeting, Rest of River Remedy
- 13: Regional Housing Workshop, 10:30-12:30 @ Goshen Town Hall
- 16: Board of Health Orientation
- 18: Special Commission Meeting, Pipeline Meeting @ BCC
- 30: Resources for Economic Development, Westover Club (Chicopee)

### OCTOBER

- 2: Executive Committee
- 13: Columbus Day
- 16: Annual Dinner
- 23-24: Southern New England APA Conference, Providence RI

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