

COMMON GROUND

A NEWSLETTER FOR COMMUNITY PLANNING IN THE BERKSHIRE REGION

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North Adams Updates Zoning Map, Districts

The City of North Adams has partnered with BRPC to update their existing zoning map and the zone districts within. The existing zoning map dates back to the 1950s, is in black and white and has been amended (changed) dozens of times over the past 60 years. The existing zoning map also contains many parcels that have two or three types of zoning, which can lead to confusion about the uses permitted on a particular property. The Use Regulation Schedule, which lists all of the uses permitted or prohibited in each zone district, contains some outdated uses and is missing many current uses. The update is mostly intended to “clean-up” these outdated aspects of the zoning map and ordinance, rather than institute drastic changes.

To this end, zone district boundaries will be aligned with existing property lines as much as possible in order to greatly reduce the number of properties that have “split zoning”. This alignment with property lines also then allows a more exact delineation of where zoning boundaries exist on earth, as many property lines have been surveyed or can be surveyed.

Similar zone districts will be combined, such as the CA-1 and CA-2 zones, which will become the new B-1 (Local Business) zone district. Currently, the difference between these two existing zones, and other existing zones, is negligible. The number of zone districts will decrease from 18 to 12.

Lastly, outdated uses in the Use Regulation Schedule will be deleted, such as “ice plants” and “private sanitariums”. Other uses will be added to the schedule, such as “mini-self storage”, “car dealerships”, “car rental” and “hair salons”. When uses such as these are not mentioned, confusion or conflict can arise as to which zone district a use is permitted in, or whether the use is permitted at all.

In summary, although much of the zoning ordinance will remain unchanged, the updated zoning map and related text will make the ordinance easier to read, interpret and enforce, while encouraging growth in accordance with the 2014 Comprehensive Plan.

For more information, contact Senior Planner Chris Gruba (cgruba@berkshireplanning.org or x12)

2020 Regional Transportation Plan Under Construction

Transportation Planning staff are preparing to update the region’s long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The RTP has a 20-year planning horizon and is updated every four years. The Plan serves as the County’s overarching transportation planning document and is required to ensure the region remains eligible to receive federal transportation funding. The RTP employs a systematic approach to evaluate the performance of the transportation system, to identify ‘needs’ or deficiencies in the system, and to develop solutions that best address any existing gaps.

To help identify transportation needs, BRPC has developed a public survey – available online at www.surveymonkey.com/r/berkshireplan. The survey is meant to provide Berkshire residents the opportunity to identify key transportation challenges and to voice in what way the County’s transportation system can better serve their daily wants, needs and aspirations.

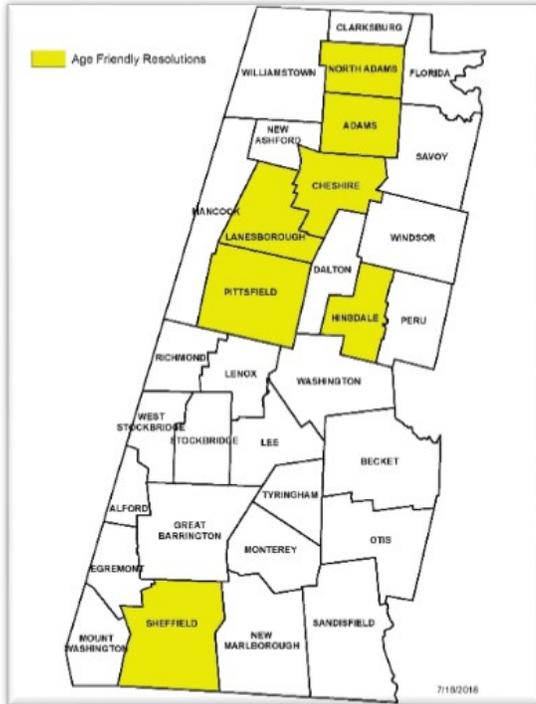
If you’d like more information about the Berkshire RTP – please join BRPC at the Berkshire Athenaeum Auditorium (1 Wendell Ave., Pittsfield, MA 01201) on Wednesday October 17th at 5:00 p.m. for a public information session. You can also find members of BRPC’s transportation team at Pittsfield’s Third Thursday event on September 20th, 2018. Stop by, find out more about the RTP, and let us know where you see opportunity to help strengthen the region’s transportation network.

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

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E-mail info@berkshireplanning.org today to subscribe!

Age Friendly Berkshires Progress Report



The Age Friendly Berkshires Action Plan is rolling out - with events planned and scheduled, the publication of the inaugural AFB Newsletter, fundraising for a fall video production and Berkshire municipalities signing Municipal Age Friendly Resolutions to undertake their own Age Friendly projects!

Autumn kicks off the **Age Friendly 50+ Job Fair** on Wednesday, September 26th at the Pittsfield Athenaeum from 10:00-12:00. Over two dozen employers have signed up so far! Promoting work opportunities for older adults is one of the Employment Goals identified in the Age Friendly Berkshires Action Plan. The Age Friendly Age 50+ Job Fair is co-hosted by Task Force partners, Elder Services of Berkshire County, AARP-MA Chapter and Berkshire Works and AFB. Please join us on September 26th!

Age Friendly Berkshires will be attending the Berkshire County Realtor Association's 2018 Berkshire Housing Summit on Thurs. Sep 20, 2018 at 5:00pm to talk about the Action Plan strategies for housing older adults across the county.

The inaugural edition of the **Age Friendly Berkshires Newsletter** was published in July via email to over 1300 subscribers! There are a limited number of paper copies also available. To subscribe to the electronic version of the newsletter, scan the QR code at left with your smart phone. Paper subscribers, or those unable to read the



QR code, please call us at 413-442-1521 x16 or email agefriendlyberkshires@gmail.com with "subscribe to newsletter" in the subject line. The AFB Newsletter can also be downloaded from agefriendlyberkshires.com and via our Facebook page. Be sure to "like" us on FB too, for up-to-the-minute news!



Coming to a Theater near you – **Becoming Age Friendly Berkshires**, a video production by Berkshire Film and Media Collaborative. Fundraising and preliminary scripting is underway for a promotional video for and about the Age Friendly Berkshires movement, due to begin filming this fall. Without giving too much away, the video aims to showcase what Age-Friendly Berkshires is all about, while creating excitement and buy-in around the Action Plan goals. Donations are now being sought to defray the cost of the production. Business and Organizational

sponsors will receive promotional credit in the video. For more information, contact AFB Steering Committee member Nancy Stoll at 413-441-6439 or at nstoll68@gmail.com.

Municipalities are making their commitment to Age Friendly Berkshires "official" by signing **Municipal Age Friendly Resolutions**. Using the 8 Municipal Age Friendly Checklists as a guide, communities are asked to identify their Age Friendly projects and priorities for the years ahead. In mid-July, Lanesborough became the latest Berkshire community to sign a Resolution, and identified creating an Age-Friendly Park, creating accessible and affordable housing, providing greater access to fresh, healthy foods and reinforcing their support for regional economic development and employment, as priorities. Stay tuned for further announcements as more municipalities sign resolutions! The Municipal Age Friendly Resolution Template and 8 Municipal Checklists are available for download on the AFB website under "Resources."

If you would like a template for a municipal resolution or assistance in getting one passed in your municipality, contact Peg at 413-442-1521 x16.

Save the Date: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Annual Dinner

Thursday, October 25, 2018 at 5:00pm
Country Club of Pittsfield-639 South Street
Keynote Speakers on Development Projects in Berkshire County

Year 4 of the Community Compact Cabinet Program

The Community Compact Cabinet (CCC) program kicked off its fourth year on August 15th. CCC will continue to offer three grants for FY19: Best Practice program, Efficiency and Regionalization program, and IT Grant program. For more information on each of these programs visit www.mass.gov/ccc

Best Practice program is open to municipalities that did not apply in FY18 (for either first or second compact). Applications began to be submitted August 15th and are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the Fiscal year. Each application will be reviewed within a month of submission. To see the complete list of best practices, visit <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/community-compact-best-practice-areas>. A municipality can choose up to two best practices to apply for.

Efficiency and Regionalization program is aimed at municipalities that are interested in regionalization or other efficiency initiatives that support long term sustainability. There is one competitive application round for this grant with the application opening online on January 15, 2019 and closing on February 15, 2019. For more information on this grant please visit: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/efficiency-and-regionalization-grant-program-faq>

IT Grant Program applications opened on August 15th. This is a competitive grant program that is for the innovation and transformation at the local level through investments in technology. Municipalities that applied for the CCC Best Practices on or before June 30, 2018 are eligible, those who received an IT Grant program in FY18 are not eligible in FY19. For more information please visit: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/community-compact-information-technology-grant-program-faq>



Statewide Municipal Best Practices Conference

Sean Cronin from the Massachusetts Division of Local Services (DLS) announced that this year's Statewide Municipal Best Practices Conference will be held on **Monday, September 24, 2018**.

The conference, to be jointly sponsored by MARPA and DLS, will be held in Worcester at the College of the Holy Cross in the Hogan Campus Center from 8:30a.m. to approximately 1:30p.m. with anticipated conference registration fee of \$20 per attendee.



Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Awarded for Cheshire and New Marlborough

The Towns of Cheshire and New Marlborough have been awarded \$998,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development for approximately 25 housing rehabilitation projects. CDBG funds will assist low to moderate income homeowners by providing them with 0% interest deferred payment loans for home improvement projects including: roofing, foundation repair, energy efficient windows and doors, insulation, accessibility improvements, electrical repair, lead paint removal, etc.

BRPC is accepting applications for the Cheshire and New Marlborough Housing Rehabilitation Program now and anticipates beginning work by the middle of October pending administrative and environmental clearances.

This Program is Now Accepting Applications for Both Homeowners AND Licensed Contractors!

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



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Berkshire Opioid Addiction Prevention Collaboration and Age Friendly Berkshires Newsletters

Both Berkshire Opioid Addiction Prevention Collaboration (BOAPC) and Age Friendly Berkshires have new newsletters! Scan the codes below to sign up for the newsletters! **Or email ekirby@berkshireplanning.org to be added to either list.**



COMING SOON - Berkshire Municipalities List Serve

We are in the final stages of developing a list serve for municipal officials to be able to post questions to their peers about municipal best practices and to exchange information. You may soon be receiving an email inviting you to participate on this list serve. For more information or to sign up, contact Mark Maloy (mmaloy@berkshireplanning.org)

CALENDAR

Be sure to check out our online calendar for updates, cancellations, recently posted events and agendas. berkshireplanning.org/events/calendar

If you prefer not to receive this newsletter, please send an email to: info@berkshireplanning.org and we will remove your name from the mailing list.

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September 6 - BRPC Executive Meeting, 4:00 pm

September 27 - BRPC Commission Meeting, 7:00 pm

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October 11 - BRPC Executive Meeting, 4:00 pm

October 25 - BRPC Annual Dinner, 5:00 pm

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