KYLE HANLON, Chair
JOHN DUVAL, Vice-Chair
SHEILA IRVIN, Clerk
MALCOLM FICK, Treasurer
THOMAS MATUSZKO, A.I.C.P.
Executive Director

BRPC
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

January 25, 2021

District Local Technical Assistance 2021

Notice of Available Technical Assistance

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) is soliciting eligible projects from its member communities to receive technical assistance under the 2021 District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) program. Under this program, BRPC staff provides technical assistance to communities, at no cost to the community, on eligible projects.

Description of the DLTA Program

The DLTA fund is an annual grant established via Massachusetts General Laws. For fiscal year 2021, this fund received an annual appropriation to be distributed statewide to regional planning agencies to support local and regional planning and service provision projects. BRPC received an allocation of $214,214 for its staff to provide technical assistance to its member communities.

Priority Funding Areas for Technical Assistance

A proposed project must fall into one of the two general priority categories listed below to be considered eligible for technical assistance:
1) "Planning Ahead for Housing" (or to help reach the Statewide Housing Production Goal) or "Planning Ahead for Growth"; and
2) Community Compact Cabinet Activities

All proposed projects should align with Community Compact Cabinet Best Practices. Please see Attachment # 1 for examples of eligible projects for each priority funding area and Attachment # 2 for Community Compact Cabinet activities that communities are encouraged to pursue. Community Compact best practices can include both those that are part of the Community Compact Cabinet program as a first priority and also best practices that explicitly align with Community Compact Cabinet best practices but are not best practices identified in a signed Community Compact Cabinet agreement.

Application Deadline

Applications for technical assistance must be received at the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission office by 5:00 PM on **February 25, 2021. Submissions prior to this deadline are very welcome and encouraged.**

Instructions

Please complete and return the attached form titled "Request for Technical Assistance" before the application deadline. **All applications must be signed by the Select Board Chairperson or Mayor.**

Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss potential projects with BRPC staff *prior* to submitting an application.

No Local Match Requirement

There is no local match requirement to receive technical assistance under the 2021 DLTA program. However, municipalities are encouraged to provide a voluntary cash or in-kind match.

Evaluation of Applications

Preference will be given to applications that meet the following criteria:

Primary Criteria

- *Supports municipalities that are seeking assistance to achieve designation under the Housing Choice Initiative.*
- *Supports municipalities seeking to adopt best practices under the Community Compact Cabinet program.*
- *Supports best practices and activities identified in the Community Compact Cabinet program.*
- *Achieves the objectives of the two priority funding areas, especially COVID-19 relief or recovery activities that fall within the priority categories.*
- *Regional Cooperation and/or resource sharing (e.g. involves multiple (2+) municipalities and supports collaboration).*
- *Responds to a regional development need.*
- *Enhances the economic competitiveness of the region, including such topics as local permit streamlining, assessing economic development opportunities in a community or region, downtown economic revitalization, mixed use development, establishment, expansion, or utilization of a Ch. 43D priority development site.*
- *Addresses the housing needs of a community and/or the region, especially related to 40R districts.*
- *Implements components of local plans or previous studies related to economic development or housing.*
- *Is likely to catalyze changes "on the ground" (redevelopment, approved zoning changes, new by-laws, regulation, service delivery cost savings, inter-municipal collaboration on service delivery or renewable energy use/production, etc.).*
- *Serves as a model for other municipalities.*

<u>Secondary Criteria</u>

- *The extent to which the project can be completed by BRPC staff.*
- *Efforts will be made to distribute projects to different municipalities throughout the region.*
- *Multiple projects in a single municipality will only be awarded if funding allows, not including participants in a regional application.*
- *Receipt of and performance on past DLTA projects.*
- *Availability of other funding sources.*
- *Provision of a voluntary cash, especially municipal funds, or in-kind match.*

Decisions & Notice of Awards

➢ All decisions are at the discretion of BRPC staff based upon its interpretation of the evaluation criteria and the availability of funding.

➢ BRPC reserves the right to request additional information before a decision is made.

➢ If a proposed project exceeds BRPC's ability to undertake a project through the DLTA program, BRPC and the applicant may engage in a strategic discussion about either reducing the scope of the project or obtaining additional funding (e.g. local contribution, other grants) to complete the portion of the project that exceeds the DLTA-funded elements of the project.

➢ BRPC anticipates selecting projects for technical assistance in March 1 2021. Applicants will be notified in writing of the decisions. Successful applicants should be prepared for a working meeting / phone conversation with BRPC staff starting the week of March 1, 2021 to discuss the project.

NOTE: Funds cannot be used for routine administrative tasks of municipalities, including, but not limited to, grant application preparation, and cannot substitute DLTA funds for which other state resources are available.

BRPC Contacts:

If you have any questions or wish to discuss a project idea, please contact:

Thomas Matuszko, Executive Director, (413) 442-1521 ext. 34, tmatuszko@berkshireplanning.org

BRPC
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

Request for Technical Assistance
District Local Technical Assistance Program, 2021

PART 1. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Lead Municipality: _____ **Date:** _____

Point of Contact, Lead Municipality, as designated by the governing body (*please print*)**:**

Name: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ **E-mail:** _____

Partner Municipalities: (List all partner municipalities, contacts and contact information (e-mail and phone) from those municipalities:

_____

_____

_____

Does your Municipality have a current signed Community Compact Cabinet Agreement?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
If yes, for what Best Practice _____

Has your Municipality received or is it seeking Housing Choice Initiative designation?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

PART 2. TYPE OF ASSISTANCE

Please check the type of assistance requested:

- ☐ Housing Choice Initiative
- ☐ Implements a Communities' Signed Community Compact Cabinet Best Practice
- ☐ Community Compact Cabinet Activities
- ☐ Planning Ahead for Housing
- ☐ Planning Ahead for Growth

PART 3. ASSISTANCE PROPOSAL

Please attach a brief (one-page) summary of the project that addresses the following topics:

1. **Purpose:** Provide a concise statement of the purpose and type of assistance requested.

2. **Priority Funding Areas**: Provide a concise description of how your assistance request addresses one of the priority funding areas. If your request is to adopt or implement a signed Community Compact best practice, please identify that best practice. If your request is to seek Housing Choice Initiative designation, please describe how your community intends to obtain that designation.

3. **Project Background**: Briefly describe how the proposed project fits with other municipal objectives such as the implementation of activities set forth in a master plan or other planning document. If applicable, please describe any related projects recently completed or currently underway that directly relate to the proposed project. Please also note any planned action or investment that would or could potentially result from the successful completion of the proposed action.

4. **Project Scope & Timeline**: Please list and provide a short description of the major tasks and anticipated timeline to achieve the proposed project, including the anticipated starting date.

5. **Desired Results**: Please provide a description of the results (deliverables or products) that are desired as an outcome of this project.

6. **Local Official/Staff Commitment**: Please provide a description of the municipal officials/committee members/ staff members who will be involved with this project, clearly identifying their roles.

7. **Local Match**: Please identify any voluntary in-kind or cash match

PART 4. APPLICATION SUBMITTAL PROCESS

Applications are due by 5:00 pm **February 25, 2021.**

A word version of this application is available at: https://berkshireplanning.org/dlta-applications-now-available/

IMPORTANT:

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, BRPC staff is working remotely. *Application packets must be sent via email only to:*

Thomas Matuszko, Executive Director
1 Fenn Street, Suite 201
Pittsfield, MA 01201
tmatuszko@berkshireplanning.org
Fax (413) 442-1523

Please note that any awards made under this solicitation are contingent on the continuing availability of funds provided to BRPC from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. BRPC reserves the right to re-direct funds to respond to the COVID-19 crisis if necessary.

PART 5. AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

Please include the signature of the <u>Chief Elected Official</u> authorizing you to submit this request.

Name _____ **Date**_____

Title _____

Signature _____
                           (MAYOR/SELECT BOARD CHAIR)

Attachment # 1 - Examples of Eligible Projects for Each Priority Funding Area

a. **Planning Ahead for Housing:** Planning and implementation activities that encourage and support affordable and market-rate housing production opportunities or support municipalities complying with new HUD fair housing regulations, specifically related to the Housing Goal of 135,000 new units by 2025, that may include, but are not limited to:
- The development of market, mixed-income and affordable multi-family housing in transit-oriented-development locations, employment centers, downtown locations and state endorsed Priority Development Areas (PDAs) within the RPA's jurisdiction, including any "Gateway municipality" (see MGL, c. 23A, s. 3A);
- The creation of as-of-right zoning districts such as those eligible under DHCD's Compact Neighborhoods policy or the Chapter 40R/Smart Growth statute including starter homes;
- Consideration of Transfer Development Rights zoning districts including areas that may qualify as sending and receiving areas.
- Development of Workforce housing under the Housing Development Incentive Program (HDIP) and Urban Center Housing TIF areas.
- The creation of prompt and predictable permitting through an Expedited Permitting Priority Development Site using Chapter 43D for Residential;
- Identifying challenges and solutions in respect to infrastructure requirements that affect the ability to construct multi-family residential projects in as-of-right zoning districts and parcels;
- Identifying multi-family residential projects subject to the Permit Extension Act (as amended), assessing impediments to such projects, and recommending steps that the Commonwealth and/or the applicable municipality could realistically take to enable those projects to go forward;
- Regional analysis of affordable and market-rate housing needs, to include, for example, preparation of a *Housing Production Plan* pursuant to 760 CMR 56.00 et. seq., and similar undertakings that may guide the execution of a compact among communities for locating affordable and market-rate housing;
- Assisting one or several municipalities who must comply with requirements under the new Fair Housing regulation issued by HUD;
- Assisting one or more community to analyze their qualifications to be designated as a Housing Choice Community (including improvements to existing reporting related to Building Permits to the US Census).

a. **Planning Ahead for Growth:** Planning and implementation activities that encourage and support economic development opportunities that may include, but are not limited to:
- Identification, assessment and mapping of Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and Priority Preservation Areas (PPAs) at the local and regional levels, including discussion of specific areas for multi-family housing growth.
- Supporting prompt and predictable permitting through the Chapter 43D Expedited Permitting Program for Economic Development projects;
- Identifying challenges and solutions in respect to infrastructure requirements that affect the ability to advance economic development activities;
- At a city or town's request, identifying economic development projects subject to the Permit Extension Act (as amended), assessing impediments, and recommending steps that state

and/or the applicable municipality could realistically take to enable those projects to go forward; and

- Developing or updating components of municipal master plans and providing technical assistance that supports the implementation of strategies which are designed to advance well-planned growth and development policies and practices.

b. **Supporting the Community Compact, including regionalization:** Supporting municipalities who are seeking to adopt state best practices under the Community Compact Cabinet program, including those who want to pursue projects of a regional nature. Assisting Compact Communities with implementation of their Community Compact best practice selection(s).

c. **Supporting the Housing Choice Initiative:** Supporting the Housing Choice Initiative (HCI) and communities that are seeking assistance to achieve Designation under the HCI. The HCI will designate communities who have produced certain levels of housing and have best practices that allow for compact housing development. Priority shall be to support Designated Housing Choice Communities. The activities under "Planning Ahead for Housing" qualify as best practices under the HCI.

Attachment 2: Community Compact Best Practice Areas

Note: DLTA funds shall not be used for any activities related to assertion of the General Land Area Minimum (GLAM) (1.5% of total land area) safe harbor under 760 CMR 56.03 (b) (Chapter 40B).

Age and Dementia Friendly Best Practices

Age-friendly communities are livable for residents of all ages, inclusive of older adults and those living with dementia. Age-friendly communities strive to be equitable and accessible with walkable streets, housing and transportation options, access to services, and opportunities for residents to participate in community activities.

Best Practice: Convene leaders of municipal departments, businesses, local citizen groups, regional planning agencies, and private and non-profit organizations to align interests with a goal of creating an ongoing process of community assessment, action planning and implementation, and prioritize age and dementia-friendly efforts. Create process to support, acknowledge and reward local businesses and non-- profit entities that work to become age and/or dementia friendly.

Best Practice: Utilize data for a baseline assessment and recommendations, including Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative (MHAC) Community Profiles or World Health Organization (WHO) Checklist of Essential Features.

Best Practice: Conduct a comprehensive baseline assessment utilizing an indicators analysis and community survey. The assessment will inform action planning and implementation phases.

Best Practice: Conduct a baseline assessment of dementia friendly practices using National Alzheimer's and Dementia Resource Center dementia-capability tool or similar nationally recognized assessment tool or process.

Best Practice: Create maps from the research conducted through the baseline analysis, illustrating the geographic properties of the indicators. These indicators may include, but are not limited to: housing, mobility, food distribution, dementia-friendly services; indicators unique to the community.

Best Practice: Review municipal policies and regulations with a goal of promoting "aging in all policies."

Best Practice: Engage in a community-wide conversation about attitudes toward aging and dementia and language related to aging to raise public awareness that aging is an asset and that individuals living with dementia can make meaningful contributions to community life.

Best Practice: Create an online database with local information and resources of programs, services, discount programs and benefits for older adults and their caregivers.

Best Practice: Develop policies and services to improve elder economic security and help people age in community, such as: property tax deferral program, property tax work-off program, handy man programs, energy assistance, transportation for non-drivers, designation of age-friendly employers, etc.

Education Best Practices

Best Practice: Focus on college and career planning, in collaboration with regional workforce organizations (e.g., MassHire Career Centers), beginning in middle school and continuing through high school.

Best Practice: Implement collaborative arrangements among regional vocational technical schools, comprehensive high schools, and community colleges to maximize opportunities for high school students and adults to access specialized vocational education programs.

Best Practice: Create opportunities for municipal governments to collaborate with high schools and colleges to provide students with internship experiences aligned to their courses of study, especially in STEM-related departments (i.e., IT, engineering department, accounting, etc.).

Best Practice: Improve the alignment and integration of YouthWorks and Connecting Activities programs for local high school students pursuing summer jobs and paid internships.

Best Practice: Strengthen partnerships between public safety, social services, healthcare providers, and local public and private schools to establish systems and protocols for assessing and identifying children and young adults who present risks to themselves or to others, in order to ensure effective and pro-active responses that can prevent violence and provide timely supports to individuals in need.

Energy and Environment Best Practices

Greenhouse Gas Reduction

Best Practice: Plan Ahead to mitigate climate change by establishing goals. creating an action plan, assigning responsibility, and tracking progress

Best Practice: Use Renewable Energy instead of fossil fuels by generating or purchasing clean power and by zoning for renewable power generation

Best Practice: Increase Energy Efficiency in order to reduce power consumption, fuel costs, and GHG emissions

Best Practice: Promote Zero or Low Carbon Transportation to reduce municipal transportation emissions & those from people living/working in the community

Best Practice: Encourage Sustainable Development to reduce, through higher density & mixed-use, the number distance of car trips & resulting GHG emissions

Best Practice: Protect and Manage Natural Resources to reduce carbon emissions from loss of natural land cover and to encourage carbon sequestration

Best Practice: Reduce Municipal Solid Waste and Increase Recycling in order to reduce GHG emissions associated with solid waste disposal

Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience

Best Practice: Complete a Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Plan through the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program to assess local risks from climate change and identify potential actions to enhance community resiliency

Best Practice: Use Municipal Vulnerability Action Grant or Other Funding to Implement Adaptation Actions that utilize nature-based solutions & engage Environmental Justice communities.

Best Practice: Engage & Protect Vulnerable Populations in adaptation planning & action to decrease risk to those who are more susceptible to climate change effects

Best Practice: Mainstream Climate Resilience into Capital Planning & Budgeting to ensure investments decrease risk & enhance resilience to a changing climate

Best Practice: Integrate Climate Adaptation into Land Use and Environmental Regulation to minimize future risk & costs for new and redevelopment

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

Best Practice: Become a Green Community pursuant to M.G.L. c. 25A §10 to realize the energy & environmental benefits

Best Practice: Construct Zero Energy Buildings (or communities) to eliminate GHG emissions, reduce cost, & enhance resiliency

Best Practice: Provide Electric Vehicle Infrastructure to facilitate the purchase & use of electric vehicles

Best Practice: Become a Solarize Mass or Solarize Mass Plus Community in order to help achieve renewable energy use & GHG reduction goals

Sustainable Development and Land Protection

Best Practice: Complete a Master or Open Space & Recreation Plan to guide land conservation & development decisions including zoning & land acquisition

Best Practice: Zone for Natural Resource Protection, Transfer of Development Rights, Traditional Neighborhood, or Transit Oriented Development

Best Practice: Invest in Land Conservation or Park Creation/Restoration via Community Preservation Act or other funds to protect land & provide outdoor recreation

Best Practice: Plant Trees or Adopt a Tree Retention Bylaw/Ordinance to preserve and enhance tree cover

Water Resource Management

Best Practice: Require Localized Flood Protection Best Practices, including Stormwater Management Measures to increase recharge, manage water movement, reduce pollution, and control flooding to protect lives, public safety, infrastructure, the environment, & critical assets.

Best Practice: Protect Public Water Sources in order to reduce potential threats to water quality and the public health of system customers; establish and maintain emergency connections with other municipal or regional systems.

Best Practice: Manage Water and Wastewater Assets for timely maintenance and rehabilitation, to lower energy use, and to reduce Infiltration and Inflow to minimize unintended storm and wastewater in the system

Best Practice: Implement Water Conservation Measures to ensure long-term water resource sustainability, enable growth, & avoid new source development.

Best Practice: Utilize Advanced Financing Tools such as an enterprise fund, stormwater utility, full cost pricing, or water bank for water/waste/storm water systems

Waste Management

Best Practice: Enhance Waste Ban Compliance so that recyclable and hazardous materials are diverted from the waste stream and reused or recycled

Best Practice: Develop Waste Contracts that are fiscally. environmentally. and otherwise beneficial to the community

Best Practice: Adopt Pay-As-You-Throw so that residents have an incentive to reduce trash disposal and save money

Best Practice: Increase the Recycling Rate through regulatory improvements, service expansion, and other mean in order to reduce waste and disposal costs

Best Practice: Enhance Education via Recycle Smart MA, the Recycling IQ Kit, etc. so residents throw away less, recycle more, & follow smart waste practices

Site Cleanup

Best Practice: Complete a Brownfields Inventory so that the community is aware of all abandoned & underutilized properties & can develop plan of action

Best Practice: Conduct Site Assessments to determine the nature and extent of contamination and develop a plan of action

Best Practice: Clean Sites to prevent further releases or the spreading of contaminants and to bring sites back into productive use

Best Practice: Facilitate Site Cleanup and Reuse to encourage assessment, cleanup, & reuse of privately held sites offer tax incentives or update regulation

Agriculture

Best Practice: Adopt a Right to Farm By-law/Ordinance to clearly indicate that agriculture is a local priority and to minimize abutter conflicts

Best Practice: Establish an Agricultural Commission to advocate for local farms, administer a right to farm bylaw, & otherwise represent agricultural interests

Best Practice: Support Sustainable Forestry to help the forest economy in rural areas, improve forest habitats, and assist in the conservation of forest land

Best Practice: Support Local Agriculture including Urban Agriculture, Aquaculture, Floriculture, & Horticulture, via marketing, food sourcing, & Farmers Markets to help local businesses and increase awareness of and access to fresh agricultural products

Financial Management Best Practices

Best Practice: Establish a Budget document that details all revenues and expenditures, provides a narrative describing priorities and challenges, and offers clear and transparent communication of financial policies to residents and businesses.

Best Practice: Develop. document and implement Financial Policies and Practices including reserve levels. capital financing and use of Free Cash. Such policies should identify the responsible parties and procedural steps necessary to carrying out the directed strategy or action.

Best Practice: Develop and utilize a Long-range Planning/Forecasting Model that assesses both short- term and long-term financial implications of current and proposed policies, programs, and assumptions over a multi-year period.

Best Practice: Prepare a Capital Improvement Plan that reflects a community's needs, is reviewed, and updated annually, and fits within a financing plan that reflects the community's ability to pay.

Best Practice: Review and evaluate Financial Management Structure to ensure that the structure and reporting relationships of the community's finance offices support accountability and a cohesive financial team process.

Best Practice: Utilize Financial Trend Monitoring, modeled after the ICMA's Financial Trend Monitoring System (FTMS).

Housing and Economic Development Best Practices

Preparing for Success

Best Practice: Create an Economic Development Plan that engages diverse stakeholders, leverages local and regional economic strengths and assets, encourages innovation and entrepreneurship, and/or promotes workforce development planning and implementation.

Best Practice: Align Land Use Regulations, especially zoning, capital investments, and other municipal actions with Housing Development, Economic Development, Master, Land Use Priority, or other plans for future growth. Promote development and reuse of previously developed sites.

Best Practice: Create and Distribute an Economic Development Guide/Manual to not only promote development goals and priorities, but also specifically and clearly outlines the community's policies and procedures related to zoning and permitting.

Best Practice: Create Opportunities for Engaging Diverse Stakeholders in economic development efforts, such as to assist with identification of priority development projects, improve local permitting processes, and proactively address obstacles to housing accessibility and affordability as well as job creation.

Best Practice: Create Cross-Sector Partnerships to help carry out community-driven responses to community-defined issues and opportunities for economic development.

Best Practice: Create a District Management Entity that engages public/private stakeholders to develop and support downtown revitalization efforts.

Best Practice: Adopt as-of-Right Zoning and/or Streamlined Permitting to promote development in priority districts.

Best Practice: Adopt Zoning for Mixed-Use Development, including Transit Oriented Development, where appropriate.

Best Practice: Adopt Chapter 40R Smart Growth zoning to facilitate the creation of dense residential or mixed-use smart growth zoning districts, including a high percentage of affordable housing units, to be located near transit stations, in areas of concentrated development such as existing city and town centers, and in other highly suitable locations.

Competitiveness

Best Practice: Engage in an Economic Development Self-Assessment exercise to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas of opportunity.

Best Practice: Establish and Utilize Performance Data to evaluate the competitiveness of the community, conduct year to year comparisons, and measure performance against comparable communities.

Best Practice: Create a Public Dashboard to benchmark, monitor, and communicate to the public regarding various housing and economic development performance measures.

Housing

Best Practice: Create a Housing Production Plan (HPP) that accounts for changing demographics, including young families, changing workforce, and an aging population.

Best Practice: Amend Zoning By-Laws to allow for increased density and housing opportunities in a manner that is consistent with neighborhood character and supportive of aging in community.

Best Practice: Develop Sector Strategies and Plans in collaboration with various providers and stakeholders to address homelessness for specific high need population groups, such as homeless youth, veterans, older adults, and/or families.

Best Practice: Complete an Assessment of Fair Housing Report, including strategic goals in alignment with HUD's new rules to affirmatively further fair housing. Using HUD data, local data and knowledge, a significant community participation process, and the assessment tool provided by HUD, the community will prepare, complete, and submit its AFH to HUD.

Urban Renewal Planning

Best Practice: Determine need and appropriateness of establishing an Urban Renewal Entity in accordance with MGL chapter 121B. If prepared to proceed, develop action plan and timeline for the creation of the urban renewal entity.

Best Practice: Prepare an Urban Renewal Plan Application in accordance with MGL chapter 121B in partnership with the urban renewal entity.

<u>Human Resources Best Practices</u>

Best Practice: Cost-Out Collective Bargaining proposals so that the impact of the total package is known. This provides the municipality with a clear understanding of both short-term and long-term budgetary impacts.

Best Practice: Develop a Workplace Safety program so that the risk of on-the-job injuries is minimized.

Best Practice: Develop a formal Wage and Classification Plan that details, at a minimum, job descriptions, employee grades, and salary ranges, thereby providing the municipality with a tool to make pay decisions that are reasonable in comparison to similar work being carried out in all areas of city/town government.

Best Practice: Develop Employee Policies and Procedures for things such as discrimination, sexual harassment, information technology use, drug and alcohol, use of social media, and town-owned vehicles.

Best Practice: Manage employee benefit costs such as health insurance, dental insurance, unemployment insurance, and worker's compensation/111F; includes eligibility review and evaluation of insurance choices.

Best Practice: Prepare a Succession Plan to help address the pending wave of retirements that will challenge a municipality's ability to maintain service levels and utilize expertise and experience of mature workers through consulting or mentorship programs.

Best Practice: Explore Centralized Human Resources/Personnel Operations to improve service delivery and build efficiencies.

<u>Information Technology Best Practices</u>

Best Practice: Perform a general IT assessment that results in a written evaluation and best practice recommendations. At a minimum, the assessment should include a review of hardware infrastructure, networking, backup, email, and user account management.

Best Practice: Perform a cyber security assessment to identify human and technology risks within the environment, analyze and identify gaps in existing cyber security processes, assess vulnerability to external attack and identify steps to remediate identified issues.

Best Practice: Review technology organizational structure, spending and business goals across the community

and develop a strategy to prioritize technology investments.

Best Practice: Design a regional shared IT services program to maximize technology resources across communities and/or school districts.

Best Practice: Develop IT resiliency, recovery and contingency plans that are aligned with community realities and position the community to effectively manage unforeseen events.

Best Practice: Develop a plan to improve digital communications with the public, including content structure on the website, practices around content creation and ownership and social media.

Best Practice: Evaluate open checkbook and/or open budget technologies that are easily consumed by the public, promote transparency, and allow data to be downloaded in a machine-readable format.

Best Practice: Identify a business process that is inefficient and not meeting the expectations of key stakeholders, perform an analysis, and develop a plan to better meet the needs of stakeholders and more effectively leverage technology.

Best Practice: Develop a document and/or records management strategy that results in operational efficiencies and improved responsiveness to the public.

Public Accessibility Best Practices

Best Practice: Undertake an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Self-Evaluation and Develop a Transition Plan to comply with Federal civil rights laws that require public buildings to be accessible to persons with disabilities.

Best Practice: Strive for the Universal Participation (UP) designation from the Mass Cultural Council by encouraging and supporting arts and cultural facilities and events in the community.

Public Health Best Practices

Best Practice: Community Coalitions are a way to become a Prevention Prepared Community. Utilize SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) Model as a comprehensive guide to plan, implement, and evaluate prevention practices and programs to address substance use and other community issues.
There are multiple SPF strategies communities can implement, which can be reviewed with staff from the Bureau of Substance Addiction Services.

Best Practice: Assess where in the municipality overdoses occur and develop environmental solutions and improve monitoring of hotspots. Place signage in areas where overdoses occur (such as public bathrooms) to promote carrying naloxone and calling for help.

Best Practice: Equip all first responders -with naloxone and appropriate medical supplies and ensure all first responder personnel are trained to recognize and respond to an overdose.

Best Practice: Use SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) to ensure a consistent data-driven planning process across the community focused on implementing culturally competent and sustainable strategies and interventions that will have a measurable effect on preventing and reducing opioid abuse and opioid overdoses.

Best Practice: Assess opportunities with other municipalities for shared public health services. Examples include infectious disease surveillance and follow-up, retail food establishment inspections, and recreational camp inspections.

Best Practice: Convene local and state health and enforcement officials to develop a standardized response protocol, by region, for animal hoarding. Establish a single point of contact for case responders to report concerns

about an individual hoarder or their family. The contact will then seek follow-up by the appropriate service agency, including but not limited to the: Department of Mental Health, Department of Children and Families, Executive Office of Elder Affairs, Disabled Persons Protection Commission, and the Department of Veteran's Services.

Best Practice: Healthy Community Design focuses on changing policies and practices to create conditions for people to eat better and move more where they live, learn, work, and play. Conduct a Built Environment Regulatory Review (BERR), a point-in-time evaluation of existing municipal policies/plans/regulations. The review will provide a baseline from which to prioritize strategies to promote walking and biking. This best practice can be combined with several other best practices that relate to municipal zoning and land-use.

Best Practice: Conduct a Community Food Assessment (CFAs}, an evaluation of the food system within a single neighborhood/municipality/region that defines needs and assets to improve access to healthy foods. The evaluation may lead to a Community Food Plan that identifies priority actions (i.e., addition of food retail into a town's economic development plan). This best practice can be combined with several other best practices that relate to municipal zoning and land-use.

Best Practice: Implement and enforce evidence-based tobacco control strategies at the point of sale to reduce youth initiation of tobacco use.

Best Practice: Climate Change Adaptability Planning. Data collection, strategy development and planning at the local level are critical to the overall preparedness and long-term resilience to the effects of climate change. Develop a report that identifies: the range of climate impacts, associated potential health outcomes, vulnerable populations, the additional burden of health outcomes due to Climate Change, and
the most suitable health interventions. Use the CDC's BRACE framework to develop and implement a plan that introduces health system program changes.

Best Practice: Develop foodborne illness outbreak protocols and assess capacity to enforce regulations that evaluate food systems.

Best Practice: Identify risk areas for housing sanitation inspection and enforcement and assess capacity to enforce minimum housing standards.

Best Practice: Assess capacity to ensure all housing inspections include lead hazard identification and that lead inspections are conducted when requested by families with small children.

Best Practice: Local boards of health (LBOH) can take a leadership role to advance health equity by: 1) building internal infrastructure, 2) working across government; 3) fostering community partnerships, and 4) championing transformative change. LBOH should adapt strategic practices to advance health equity in local health both internally within their departments and externally with communities and other government agencies. DPH Office of Local and Regional Health and Office of Health Equity staff are available to answer questions and connect LBOH with resources.

Best Practice: Implement the National CLAS Standards within local public health to help advance and sustain culturally and linguistically appropriate services by establishing a framework to serve the increasingly diverse communities.

Best Practice: Conduct assessments to ensure people with disabilities have access to facilities, goods, and services.

Best Practice: Disaggregate data by race/ethnicity, income status, sexual orientation/gender identity and expression, and other key demographic factors to identify and address health inequities.

Public Safety Best Practices

Best Practice: Conduct Active Shooter Preparedness and Response Training in collaboration with the Massachusetts State Police Tactical Operations (STOP) Team, onsite with local law enforcement.

Best Practice: Establish an Emergency Preparedness Plan in partnership with the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) to develop and enhance a community's disaster and emergency response capabilities.

Best Practice: Establish Hazardous Material Response Protocols in conjunction with Regional Hazardous Materials Response Teams under the Department of Fire Services, to enable cities and towns to protect their citizens, the environment, and property during incidents involving a release or potential release of hazardous materials.

Best Practice: Hold In-service Training Programs for Municipal Police to better prepare local police officers and first responders for incidents involving domestic violence, mental health disorders, and substance abuse.

Best Practice: Convene an opioid task force, consisting of key stakeholders, to identify, implement, coordinate, and improve strategies around the prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery of substance use disorders.

Best Practice: Adopt Standardized Tools for Domestic Violence Cases by partnering law enforcement with local domestic violence organizations to adopt a best practice policy on training and implementation of standardized, evidence informed danger and strangulation tools. Municipalities are encouraged to apply individually or as a collective.

Best Practice: Establish a Triad program (a partnership of three organizations-law enforcement, older adults, and community groups). This group maintains an ongoing schedule of community education to combat fraud and elder abuse involving the Attorney General's Office, Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation, District Attorneys, and other state agencies, as appropriate.

Best Practice: Collaborate with the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security and Municipal Police Training Council in specialized training to establish best practices and. methods for combatting hate crimes and supporting those of our citizens who have fallen victim to a hate crime."

Regionalization/Shared Services Best Practices

Best Practice: Regionalize services and share resources among municipalities for efficient and effective service delivery to residents and taxpayers in this era of shrinking budgets, loss of seasoned employees to retirement, and increased need for service improvements.

Transportation/ Public Works Best Practices

Citizen Safety

Best Practice: Develop a Safe and Mobile Older Drivers plan for the aging of the population by proactively addressing older driver issues, including education for older road users, infrastructure improvements, and transportation options.

Best Practice: Enhance citizen safety by establishing community-based programs to increase pedestrian, automobile, and motorcycle safety. 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.

Best Practice: Ensure Safe Infrastructure so as to provide a safer environment for all users and modes by implementing traffic engineering enhancements. The municipality will demonstrate regular and routine improvements on locally funded roads, such as cutting back vegetation at intersections where it is known to interfere with sight distance, clearing brush that obscures traffic signage, renewing or installing pavement markings, conducting nighttime surveys to check visibility and retro reflectivity, implementing traffic calming measures at known high crash locations.

Best Practice: Establish a sidewalk snow-and-ice removal program for locally owned sidewalks, with an emphasis on areas serving the most vulnerable users (childcare centers, schools, senior centers, libraries, hospitals, parks).

Active Transportation

Best Practice: Implement the Complete Streets Program by becoming certified through MassDOT and demonstrate the regular and routine inclusion of complete streets design elements and infrastructure on locally funded roads.

Best Practice: Utilize Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) fundamentals to create zoning around transit centers that maximizes bike, pedestrian, and transit use and which allows for lower levels of required parking and mixed use to put needed amenities near population centers.

Best Practice: Develop a Safe Routes to School program that also includes student education on pedestrian safety.

Best Practice: Use the MassDOT-issued Municipal Resources Guides for bicycling and walking to plan for and implement better facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians, with an emphasis on creating networks and connections among key destinations Gob centers, retail centers, public transit, schools, major residential areas).

Best Practice: Collaborate with Regional Transit Authorities, local employers, and other institutions to support sustainable commuting by providing incentives for bicycling and walking and transit use; facilities to support safe travel without a private automobile: shuttles and other similar transportation services where appropriate.

Best Practice: Collaborate with Regional Transit Authorities to improve local transit outcomes by measuring and managing to outcomes for riders, including overall ridership, ridership among low-income and transit-dependent customers, met and un-met demand for transit service, and connections made to major activity centers.

Best Practice: Establish a program for piloting new forms of micromobility (scooters, bike share, etc.), including collaborating with micromobility providers, measuring performance and usage, developing lessons learned, surveying users, and assessing contributions to overall local mobility.

Training

Best Practice: Participate in the Bay State Roads, which provides on-going training and helps municipalities share ideas and information with other communities about state-of-the-art planning, design, and operational information for city and town public works managers.

Asset and Infrastructure Management

Best Practice: Inventory and Geo-Code all public works assets so that a database of every public works asset is created, geocoded and condition rated, which is used to inform capital planning, as well as emergency repair.

Best Practice: Develop a Pavement Condition Index that rates street condition for the municipality.

Best Practice: Develop a Multi-Year Vehicle Maintenance and Replacement Plan for their municipal vehicle fleet.

Best Practice: Develop a Bridge / Culvert Preventative Maintenance plan to help prolong the life of these critical transportation assets.

Housing Choice Best Practices

Note: DLTA funds shall not be used for any activities related to assertion of the General Land Area Minimum (GLAM) (1.5% of total land area) safe harbor under 760 CMR 56.03 (b) (Chapter 40B).

Best Practices that support affordable housing are marked with an *

1. Have at least one zoning district that allows multifamily by right with capacity to add units and that allows for family housing (does not restrict units with more than 2 bedrooms)

2. *Designated local resources for housing such as established an Affordable Housing Trust, donated land, or spent substantial Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds for community housing over the last 5 years

3. *Have an approved 40R Smart Growth or Starter Homes district

4. Reduced parking requirement for Multi-Family units within the last 5 years, or require no more than 1 parking space per *unit* for multifamily units

5. Have zoning that allows for accessory dwelling units by right (or can demonstrate a pattern of approving ADUs over the last 5 years)

6. *Have Inclusionary Zoning that provides for reasonable density increases so that housing is not unreasonable precluded

7. *Have units currently eligible for inclusion in the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) that equal or exceed 10% of total year-round housing stock according to the DHCD subsidized housing inventory

8. Have zoning that allows mixed use or cluster/ Open Space Residential development by right (or can demonstrate a pattern of approving such developments over the last 5 years)

9. *Participate in the Housing Development Incentive Program, have adopted an Urban Center Housing Tax Increment Financing district, approved District Improvement Financing (DIF) related to housing, have adopted an Urban Renewal Plan that includes a significant Housing element, or have adopted property tax relief programs either as provided for by statute (MGL c. 59 section 5) or through a home rule petition

10. Selected a housing best practice as part of a Community Compact

11. *Have a CERTIFIED Housing Production Plan which means that you have an DHCD approved Housing Production Plan and have subsequently seen an increase of 0.5% or 1% in your year round housing units (see https://www.mass.gov/service-details/chapter-40-b-housing-production-plan for more information)