



A Newsletter for Community Planning in the Berkshire Region

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Staff Announcements

[Seth Jenkins](#) joined BRPC's Community Planning Program in November after working for many years as a high school educator at Hoosac Valley H.S. He is excited to use his Masters of Urban and Regional Planning to help Berkshire county communities update their master plans, open space and recreation plans, and zoning ordinances. When not working at BRPC, he can be found enjoying the natural resources of the area with his family.

Please spread the word that the BRPC **Public Health Program** has the following full-time, benefitted open positions. We will train people with the right skill set.

- Planner and Senior Planner - Berkshire Opioid Addiction Prevention Collaborative (BOAPC)
 - Planner and/or Associate Planner - to support Community and Equity Projects
 - Epidemiologist - to work on COVID mitigation, data management, equity initiatives, and more
- [Employment & Internship Opportunities - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission](#)

Grants & Opportunities

Tips for Writing Federal Grant Applications - Grants.gov Blog Series

Learn tips and advice through the Grant Writing Basics Blog Series, including:

- How to Start Working on Future Funding Opportunities
- Demystifying Funding Opportunity Announcements
- Tips to Avoid Last Minute Problems
- Making Sure You Are Eligible before Writing

<https://grantsgovprod.wordpress.com/category/learngrants/grant-writing-basics/>

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grants, deadline January 7, 2022

The MVP Program helps communities build resiliency and prepare for climate change impacts. MVP-certified communities are eligible for Action Grant Funds. Contact [Courteny Morehouse](#) for more information.

[USDA Community Forest Program](#), deadline January 10, 2022

Grants to acquire and conserve forests that provide public access and recreational opportunities, protect vital water supplies and wildlife habitat, serve as demonstration sites for private forest landowners, and provide economic benefits from timber and non-timber products.

[Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Program](#), deadline January 24, 2022.

The LWCF grant program provides financial assistance to municipalities and the state's Departments of Conservation and Recreation and Fish and Game for the acquisition of parkland, development of a new park, renovation of an existing park, development of trails in an existing conservation or recreation area, or the acquisition of conservation land. Grants up to \$1,000,000 are available.

[FEMA FY21 Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities \(BRIC\)](#), deadline January 28, 2022

The BRIC program funds hazard mitigation activities. Activities include acute extreme weather events and chronic stressors which have been observed and are expected to increase in the future.

[MassTrails Grants Program](#), deadline February 1, 2022

Project development, design, engineering, permitting, construction, and maintenance of recreational trails, shared-use pathways, and amenities that support trails. Online submissions only. Questions to Program Manager [Amanda Lewis](#) 617-645-8314.

Efficiency & Regionalization Grant Program, opens January 10 and closes February 10, 2022

The Efficiency and Regionalization (E&R) competitive grant program, offered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Community Compact / Division of Local Services, provides one-time funding for governmental entities interested in implementing regionalization and other efficiency initiatives that allow for long-term sustainability. Example projects include:

- Regionalization: shared services or facilities, intergovernmental agreements, consolidations +
- Internal Efficiencies: to improve the quality and efficiency of municipal service delivery
- Planning and implementation activities

Single govt. entities eligible for up to \$100,000, multi-jurisdictional eligible for up to \$200,000.

USDA Rural eConnectivity Program, deadline February 22, 2022

The Rural eConnectivity Program (ReConnect) Program provides loans, grants, and loan/grant combinations to facilitate broadband deployment in rural areas. Expansion of broadband services and infrastructure will fuel long-term economic development and opportunities.

Enhanced Air Quality Monitoring Funding, deadline February 25, 2022

The EPA is offering funding for communities to conduct ambient air monitoring of pollutants in communities with environmental and health outcome disparities related to pollution and/or the COVID-19 pandemic. Grant funds will support efforts to monitor air quality and to promote monitoring partnerships between communities and state and local governments. Visit this link for more information: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/enhanced-air-quality-monitoring-communities>. Eligible applicants are local governments, non-profits, and community organizations. Grants may range from \$25,000-\$500,000. Contact [Emily Lange](#) with any questions, application assistance, or to discuss project ideas, especially if you are interested in a Berkshire County regional application.

Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG), deadline February 28, 2022

Grants for rural businesses with fewer than 50 workers and less than \$1 million in gross revenue. Towns, communities, not-for-profits, and more are eligible.

Preservation Projects Fund Round 28, deadline March 18, 2022

Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF) \$800,000 grant program is a state-funded 50% matching grant reimbursement to support the preservation of properties, landscapes, and sites listed in the State Register of Historic Places. Applicants must be a municipality or nonprofit. Download the [MPPF Application](#) and [MPPF Application Instructions](#) from the [MHC website](#).

USDA Rural Economic Development Loans and Grants FY22

USDA provides zero-interest loans to local utilities, passed through to local businesses to create and retain employment in rural areas. Quarterly deadlines are: March 31, 2022; June 30, 2022.

Green Infrastructure Federal Collaborative (recorded webinar)

The Federal Collaborative on Green Infrastructure held a webinar on Navigating Federal Funding for Green Infrastructure and Nature-Based Solutions. Download a recording of the November 2, 2021 webcast, which featured resources available through EDA, NOAA, Army Corps of Engineers & EPA.

Recreation Economy at USDA Economic Development Resources for Rural Communities

www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/RD_Recreation_Economy_USDA.pdf

Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (CLFRF) for local governments. Massachusetts Executive Office for Administration & Finance Federal Funds Office [memorandum](#) outlines eligible uses. Additional information is at [Executive Office for Administration & Finance Federal Funds Office](#) and [DLS COVID-19 Resources and Guidance for Municipal Officials](#). Please contact [Tom Matuszko](#) if your community wants to pursue this.

Community Planning

Funding Open Space, Trails and Active Transportation Across the Commonwealth

On December 16, 2021, various state agencies held a webinar titled "Funding Open Space, Trails, and Active Transportation Across the Commonwealth." The Appalachian Mountain Club's Kristen Sykes hosted and moderated the meeting.

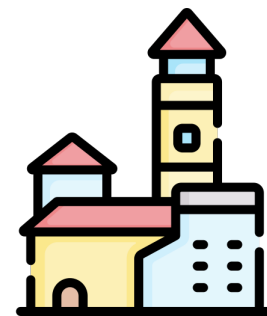
The hour and a half webinar highlighted funding sources available to municipalities, regional

planning commissions, non-profit organizations, and citizen's groups to facilitate multimodal transit opportunities in Massachusetts. Participants outlined program requirements, timelines and offered advice on securing funding. Funding sources included: the Federal TIP program (Transportation Improvement Program), MassDOT Municipal Grant program, Conservation Services Grants, MassTrails Grants, and the Solomon Foundation's programs to assist with early-stage trail planning and design work. Below are links to the video recording and PowerPoint presentation from the webinar. Presenters' contact information is included, along with recommendations to secure funding. [PowerPoint presentation](#); [Zoom recording](#)

Massachusetts Historical Commission Workshops Spring 2022

Workshops are over Zoom for the foreseeable future. Click on the workshop titles to register.

There are two ticket options: the LIVE ticket will allow you to attend the Zoom "in person" and receive a recording after the workshop ends; with the RECORDING ticket you will not receive the Zoom link but will receive a recording of the workshop. The LIVE ticket will provide you with a recording in case you can't make the workshop.



[Becoming a Certified Local Government](#) - Friday, January 14, 10 am

The National Park Service offers a **Certified Local Government (CLG)** program that allows more local involvement in historic preservation activities at the state and federal levels. This workshop will cover the requirements and application process for becoming a CLG as well as the benefits.

[Adopting a Demolition Delay Bylaw or Ordinance](#) - Thursday, January 27, 7 pm

Demolition delay bylaws/ordinances are one of the most critical preservation tools a community can adopt. This workshop will discuss the history of demolition delay bylaws/ordinances and how your community might go about adopting one.

[Introduction to Historic Preservation](#) - Tuesday, February 8, 10 am

You were appointed to a local historical commission or historic district commission - now what? This workshop will cover the basics to help you be an educated commissioner familiar with the terminology and programs of the historic preservation field.

[Administering Local Historic Districts and Design Review](#) - Thursday, February 24, 1 pm

The goal of local historic districts is to allow for the thoughtful consideration of change - protecting a neighborhood's community character while allowing changes necessitated by modern life and maintenance. This workshop will go in-depth on how to administer a local historic district, how to handle the application and review process, and will provide some guidance on design review.

[Architectural Styles, Forms, and Building Technologies](#) - Wednesday, March 9, 7 pm

This workshop will provide a very high-level overview of residential house forms, architectural styles, and changes in building technology found in Massachusetts. Better identify the historic resources in your community, more accurately date them, and set them into a larger context so you can evaluate their significance.

[Developing an Historic Preservation Plan](#) - Monday, March 21, 1 pm

Developing an historic preservation plan for your community can help you understand your historic resources better, see where there are gaps in your knowledge and level of protection, and help you discover the key preservation tools you might be missing.

[State and Federal Historic Resources Project Review & Compliance](#) - Thursday, April 7, 10 am

Laws and regulations at the state and federal levels require different kinds of review if a project will impact historic resources. Learn more about the different triggers for this review, what is involved in the process, and how your local commission might be involved.

[Historic Resources Survey & National Register of Historic Places](#) - Wednesday, April 20, 10 am

One of the most important tasks a local historical commission can undertake is to identify and evaluate the community's historic resources. Learn more about the survey process and National Register designation in this workshop, and especially how the two work hand-in-hand.



[Berkshire Benchmarks Survey](#)

The source of data and analysis on the Berkshire region!

What is living in the Berkshires like for you? Berkshire Benchmarks is conducting a survey to better understand the issues that affect county residents. Participants will be entered into a drawing for one of ten \$50 gift cards. The survey closes on **February 15, 2022**.

Learn more and participate at www.surveymonkey.com/r/Berkshire22.

Economic Development

Community One Stop for Growth

The Community One Stop for Growth is a single application portal and collaborative review process of community development grant programs that make targeted investments based on a [Development Continuum](#). This process streamlines the experience for the applicant and better coordinates economic development programs and staff on engagement and grant-making.

Expressions of Interest for FY23 programs opened in December. Through **January 31, 2022**, municipalities may submit expressions of interest for up to 5 projects. Expressions of interest may be submitted any time through March 18, 2022, but will be limited to 2 projects after January 31.

Key Dates:

Full Applications Open - late January, 2022

Full Applications Close - early June, 2022

Review & Evaluation - June - September, 2022

Notifications of Awards - October/November, 2022

Anticipated Contracting - November/December, 2022

Please contact BRPC for assistance as you prepare Expressions of Interest in this next round. One Stop webpage: www.mass.gov/guides/community-one-stop-for-growth

Environmental & Energy

Winter, Road Salts, and Water Quality

Winter in the Berkshires means snow and ice. Roadway salting makes travel safer. According to [EPA](#), Massachusetts applies nearly half a million tons of salt annually. While road salting has been key in improving roadway conditions, it can also negatively impact water quality. It can acidify surface water, increase mobilization of metals, and contaminate ground and drinking water. Higher salt concentrations in riparian areas give a competitive edge to salt-tolerant invasives that outcompete native plant and animal species. In lakes and ponds, salt can interfere with natural mixing, inhibiting microbes that remove nitrate, causing a greater chance of algal blooms during the summer months.

There is a growing regional effort to reduce salt use through smarter application and better technology. New Hampshire's "Road Salt Reduction Initiative" and the [Green SnowPro Program](#) is a response to dramatic and rising chloride concentrations, which led to chloride-impaired water bodies and contamination of drinking water in the state. Likewise, Massachusetts has started to look into salt reduction practices. The "Road Salt Reduction Program," for example, reduces salt applications around community drinking water protection areas, and MassDOT is looking to develop a salt spreader control program that calibrates salt machines to weather through roadway sensors.

[ClearRoads](#) is a national research program that offers resources, equipment reviews and connects winter maintenance personnel from around the country to inform smart snow practices that keep roadway conditions safe and reduce harm to the environment.

At the local level, here are some ideas to reduce the impacts of salt:

- Calibrate spreader to save money and the environment by preventing over application.
- Look into equipment that can improve winter maintenance, such as flex plow edges, spreader calibration scale, and plow cameras. Go to [ClearRoads](#) for a list of equipment and systems

reviewed by highway maintenance staff.

- Pre-treat roads to prevent ice buildup and reduce salting during and after a storm.
- Cover salt piles to prevent runoff.
- Consider regulation or bylaws that reduce the use of salt or salt composites with heavy metals in areas of high habitat value and vulnerable waterways.
- Train DPW and Highway Staff to avoid plowing into rivers, streams, lakes, and buffer areas.
- Recover salt and sand by street sweeping early in the spring.

Public Health



Saturday, January 8

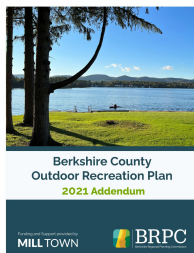
9:00 am - 2:00 pm

Clinic for Pfizer and Moderna boosters for adults, and first and second doses of the Pfizer vaccine for young people ages 5-11 years old.
Se habla español.

Patterson Field House
Berkshire Community College
1350 West St, Pittsfield, MA 01201

Registration required, no insurance needed: <https://home.color.com/vaccine/register/berkshire>

Regional Initiatives & Services



2021 Outdoor Recreation Plan Addendum Released

In 2020, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) and Mill Town teamed up to produce an extensive **210-page Outdoor Recreation Plan**. The initial plan summarized the outdoor recreation landscape of the region and identified tactics for improvements in areas such as infrastructure, communication and marketing, and a range of outdoor activities.

The **2021 Addendum** provides an update on key projects and initiatives, and captures feedback from the community after the original plan was released. The Addendum was also informed by ongoing communication with outdoor recreation stakeholders over the past 15 months. In many cases, this communication was fostered by a series of online “summits” hosted by Mill Town and BRPC. These forums have allowed land managers and business owners to share updates on their work and have sparked conversations around potential collaboration. Recordings of the online summits can be found on **BRPC’s YouTube Channel** under the Regional Initiatives playlist.

Transportation

Berkshire Microtransit (on-demand shared-ride) Survey

Microtransit is a demand-response public transit service that can offer flexible routes and on-demand scheduling. It is technology-enabled shared transportation that lives in the space between traditional fixed-route transit and ride-hailing technology like Uber or Lyft.

The Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) and Berkshire Regional Planning Commission invite residents, students, employers, and employees to complete a **brief survey**: www.berkshiretransitsurvey.com.

The **5-7 minute survey** will help us understand your transportation needs to shape the future transportation services in the Berkshires. Survey participants will be entered into a drawing for a \$100 Big Y gift card.

We encourage people to share the survey link. The survey is also available in Spanish: www.surveymonkey.com/r/transitsurvey_span

Berkshire MPO - FFY 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

We are beginning the process of preparing the FFY 2023 - 2027 TIP for Berkshire County. The TIP is a prioritized, financially constrained list of transportation projects that are expected to be built over the next several years in the Berkshires. The TIP implements the region's long-range transportation plan by programming federal-aid funds for transit, highways, bridges, transportation enhancement, bike paths, safety, and air quality improvements.

The TIP is a five-year program, which is updated annually. In January of every year, the Berkshire MPO solicits new transportation projects and updated information about active projects that are in the current TIP submitted by local communities. The projects received are then evaluated and prioritized for the up-coming TIP cycle. On **January 4, 2022**, the BMPO staff will send out the transportation projects solicitation email and data forms for the FFY 2023 -2027 TIP. The projects submission deadline is **January 31, 2022**.

For more information, contact Principal Transportation Planner [Anuja Koirala](#) or 413-442-1521 x18.

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
www.berkshireplanning.org

