



## A Newsletter for Community Planning in the Berkshire Region

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### Staff Announcements

Welcome to [Meg Arvin](#), Public Health Planner! Meg is supporting the Berkshire Overdose Addiction Prevention Collaborative (BOAPC) emphasizing youth and child-focused projects. She was most recently at the Brien Center, where she ran a program deterring substance use at Reid Middle School. Meg is proud to be an LCSW, is an avid sudoku player, came from Tennessee last year, and enjoys exploring the Berkshires and attempting to fish.



We are grateful to have [Stephen Murray](#) as a part-time Public Health Project Specialist providing technical assistance and support to the implementation of harm reduction services throughout the county including post-overdose engagement services by EMS (pilot project in North County) and training and provision of naloxone (NARCAN) to police, fire and EMS.

[Erin Jones](#) took a different position in her home state of Georgia so is no longer with the Public Health Program.

[Morgan Ovitsky](#), who was working part-time on the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), has left to be the first part-time paid staff member at Berkshire Bounty.

A warm and grateful welcome to [Summer interns](#) who are working on various projects; some are paid through BRPC\* and others through their educational institution:

Ajay Chatha	clean energy & stormwater	Williams College
Sabrina Brismeur	outdoor recreation	Williams College
Emma Doane*	community planning	Clark University
Robin Fordham*	historic preservation planning	Amherst resident
Brian Lavinio	clean energy	Williams College
Charlie McWeeny	economic development	Princeton University
Matt O'Sullivan*	stormwater mapping	UMass Amherst
Dillan Patel*	stormwater mapping	Rutgers University

### Employment Opportunities

#### [Energy and Environmental Planner](#)

This position assists communities, conservation organizations, and local committees to create a more sustainable and resilient Berkshire region.

#### [Public Health Planner\(s\)](#)

The Public Health program seeks one or more public health planners to contribute to a broad scope of dynamic and complex public health programs.

#### [BRPC Human Resources Payroll Assistant](#)

Performs day-to-day payroll and benefits transactions and maintains personnel and payroll information.

## Grants & Opportunities & Meeting Dates

### **\*Note Changes\* Thursday, July 14 virtual Commission Meetings:**

Executive Committee 4:00 pm

Full Commission 5:30 pm

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**Municipal Energy-focused Learning Opportunities** - see Environmental & Energy section below.

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### **Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grants**

Planning grants can be used to supplement hazard mitigation planning or can fund both MVP and Hazard Mitigation funding completely without match. [Check out the Planning Grant RFR here](#). Planning grant applications are due **June 7, 2022**.

For questions or assistance on either grant application, contact [Courteny Morehouse](#).

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### **State Grant Opportunities Workshops**

Recordings from previous sessions are available on our website [HERE](#):

**April 12** - One Stop for Growth overview

**April 26** - Federal Highway, MassDOT

**May 10** - Energy and Environmental Affairs: MVP, DEP, DOER, and DER

**May 24** - Mass Historic Commission, Mass Cultural Council

**Future Date TBD** - Mass Broadband Institute (MBI), Technology Services & Security  
Please register [here](#) for remaining sessions.

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## Community Planning

### **Master Plans for Lee and Monterey**

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission is excited to announce the initiation of two Berkshire County communities' Master Plan processes in Monterey and Lee.

Massachusetts General Law Title VII, Chapter 41, Section 81D stipulates that "A planning board established in any city or town under section eighty-one A shall make a master plan of such city or town or such part or parts thereof as said board may deem advisable and from time to time extend or perfect such a plan."

A Master Plan serves as a living document that guides decision-making regarding the long-term physical development of the municipality. While most Berkshire County towns have some version of a Master or Comprehensive Plan (the two terms are used interchangeably), many have not updated their plans in 20 years. Most plans have an outlook of 20 years and should be updated periodically.

A Master Plan will address topics such as 1. Goals and policies guiding future growth, 2. Land use, 3. Housing analysis, 4. Economic development, 5. Natural and cultural resources, 6. Open space and recreation, 7. Services and facilities, 8. Circulation, and 9. Implementation.

Generally, the community's Planning Board will create a steering committee from a variety town boards, committees, and agencies to ensure that all community members are represented. This committee will host various public meetings to gather feedback from the community, and these meetings, surveys, and stakeholder interviews are used to draft the document. Meetings follow Massachusetts Open Meeting Law and are posted at town halls and or on the town's website. Residents of Lee and Monterey should be on the lookout for posted meetings to have their voices heard and guide town decision-making.

## Data & Information Services

2022 State of the County Report

Berkshire Benchmarks has released the 2022 State of the County Report. The report covers indicators chosen by the community throughout 2021 and results from a community survey conducted in early 2022. You can access the report online at <https://berkshirebenchmarks.org/>. In the report, you will learn of the county's successes in the last few years, including a healthier environment, a decline in poverty, and the stabilization of our young adult population. The report also covers our challenges, including our children struggling academically during the pandemic, a decrease in housing affordability, a worsening of mental health, and the disparities among race and ethnicity. Take a few minutes to read the report and think about how you have contributed to our successes and how you can help make the Berkshires a better place to live for everyone.

# STATE OF THE COUNTY REPORT 2022



## Berkshire Benchmarks New Website

BRPC is excited to unveil the new Berkshire Benchmarks website [BerkshireBenchmarks.org](https://BerkshireBenchmarks.org)! The new website still has a data library but has improved the user interface. The website also has an Indicators section that allows users to access indicators, review the community survey results, and see how others are working to improve the sectors. Finally, the new site has a report repository, where you can find a variety of reports on the region and municipalities. Take a look and let us know what you think.



## Economic Development

### NEW - Planning Toolkit Available Online

Brief summaries have been compiled by BRPC to assist municipal leaders in learning more about various planning, zoning, and programs that may be appropriate for their community. We will continue to add to the list in the next few months, but **included in the launch of this new [Planning Toolkit](#)** are 2-page tip sheets on the following topics:

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

Adaptive Reuse Zoning  
Affordable Housing Trusts  
Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)  
Chapter 40R  
Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits  
Inclusionary Zoning  
Live Work Housing  
Low Income Housing Tax Credits  
Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE)

**Coming Soon:**

Community Preservation Act  
Community Development Corporations  
Community Land Trusts  
District Improvement Financing  
Federal Home Loan Bank System  
Historic Preservation Plans

If there's a topic you'd like us to cover please let us know!

Access the Planning Toolkit here: <https://berkshireplanning.org/resources/planning-toolkit/>

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The [Shared Economic Development Planning](#) program allows each participating town to access services and assistance that fit their specific needs and budget. Participating towns (currently Adams, Great Barrington, Lanesborough, Lenox, and Richmond) receive assistance with a wide range of projects, including downtown revitalization, grant writing, marketing/communications, business community outreach, and project-specific planning assistance. Contact us to learn more or to register for FY23. Please contact [Laura Brennan](#).

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*Please share with your business community:*

## BE PROFITABLE

Join the Mass Small Business Development Center Network for a FREE webinar workshop. Participants will leave with specific takeaways to guide them to stronger profits.

Thursday, June 9, 9-10:30 am

**Marketing for Profit:** learn to get the right marketing messages to the right people at the right time - and on the right media platforms - as a critical key to sales growth and profit.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

## Environmental & Energy

### Municipal Energy-focused Learning Opportunities

The Central Mass Regional Planning Commission and UMass Collins Center for Public Management are offering free municipal energy-focused Lunch & Learn Zoom sessions. The sessions will be Wednesdays at noon, June 8 - June 29; registration is required.

Session one on municipal microgrids was May 25<sup>th</sup>. If you missed it, email [Julia Moore](#) for the recording. [CLICK HERE](#) to find out more and register.

June 8: Leveraging Volunteer Committees to Achieve Green Goals

June 15: Peer Experiences with Hybrids, Electric Vehicles (EVs), and EV Charging Stations

June 22: Improving Energy Efficiency in Buildings: Successes, Challenges, and Strategies

June 29: Energy Justice and Increasing Access for All

## Regional Services

Click here for the digital [2022 Massachusetts Municipal Guide](#) listing municipalities by county, and federal, state and regional contacts.

## Comments Sought on Capital Improvement Plan

MassDOT recently released their Draft Fiscal Year 2023-2027 Capital Investment Plan (CIP) for public review and comment. The CIP determines how the Commonwealth prioritizes and funds local and statewide transportation projects, and determines funding for infrastructure including railroad, transit, accessibility upgrades, roadway and bridge improvements, municipal projects, as well as the capital needs of Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs).

The public can access a copy of the Draft Fiscal Year 2023-2027 CIP document on the web at <http://www.mass.gov/cip>. Also, a story map of the CIP is available to review the array of projects on the website.

Public comments allow MassDOT officials to understand the level of community support for proposed projects. Residents are encouraged to review the draft CIP and provide their comments to MassDOT on projects intended to improve Berkshire County transportation.

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## Beyond Mobility Long Range Plan

MassDOT has embarked on developing its 2050 Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan, entitled Beyond Mobility. The preparation of the Beyond Mobility long range plan includes a planning process that will result in a blueprint for guiding transportation decision-making and investments across the Commonwealth to advance transportation goals and maximize the equity and resiliency of the transportation systems.

Public feedback is at the center of the Plan and the Beyond Mobility project team is conducting robust public engagement that includes focus groups with traditionally underrepresented communities, community engagement that meets people where they are across Massachusetts, web-based surveys and mapping exercises, and other participatory outreach activities.

The first public engagement opportunity, an online public survey on the Beyond Mobility website, is now open, the survey will close on June 30, 2022. Berkshire County residents can provide input regarding their transportation challenges, priorities for the future of transportation in Massachusetts, and location-specific transportation needs, along with other feedback. The survey is available via the following link <https://arcg.is/OHHyPD>.

To learn more about Beyond Mobility, and to keep current on project updates and ongoing engagement opportunities, please visit <https://www.mass.gov/beyond-mobility>.

**Berkshire Regional Planning Commission**  
[www.berkshireplanning.org](http://www.berkshireplanning.org)



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