



A Newsletter for Community Planning in the Berkshire Region

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Staff Announcements

A warm welcome to new Public Health Planners!

[Jaymie R. Zapata](#), MSW MPH, supports community and equity-based projects, including Gray to Green in Pittsfield, Community Health Improvement Plan, Rural Health Equity Project, NEATC Hepatitis C work, and emergency preparedness projects. Her background is in community health, HIV care and research, and LGBTQ+ health. Excited to be returning to Western Mass after a long stint in Boston, Jaymie is an avid bird-watcher, artist, and inveterate sci-fi and fantasy nerd.



[Matt Gilbert](#), MPH, supports substance use disorder programming, particularly the Healing Communities Study and emergency preparedness and Public Health Alliance programs. A Lenox native, MCLA, and UMass Amherst graduate, Matt is thrilled to have a job that enhances the lives of those facing challenges. In his spare time, he enjoys reading, going for walks around town, and a good amount of vanilla ice cream with chocolate sauce.

BRPC also welcomes [Harris Agha](#), a Williams College intern who is working with Economic Development Planner Wylie Goodman on [ArtWeek Berkshires](#) September 15-25, 2022.

Employment Opportunities

[Energy and Environmental Planner](#)

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

[BRPC Human Resources Payroll Assistant](#)

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

Grants & Opportunities & Meeting Dates

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) announces funding for private, public, and non-profit entities to replace eligible diesel vehicles and equipment with zero emission technologies. Through the federal **Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA)** program, Massachusetts is conducting a competitive electric-only Solicitation with an application deadline of **5 pm August 24, 2022**. This is an early replacement program designed to accelerate the retirement of less efficient and more polluting diesel vehicles and equipment. Website for more information and to apply [HERE](#).

Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)

This grant program is an important opportunity for capital investments in the safety of Berkshire County roadways. It is a new component of the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs

Act. Local match required: 20%. To learn more about how Berkshire County could implement it by developing a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan, please email [Nicholas Russo](mailto:Nicholas.Russo@berkshireplanning.org), Senior Transportation Planner. The deadline is **September 15**.

Click image for website:



State Grant Opportunities Workshops

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

- One Stop for Growth overview
- Federal Highway, MassDOT
- Energy and Environmental Affairs: MVP, DEP, DOER, and DER
- Mass. Historic Commission, Mass Cultural Council

Date TBD - Mass Broadband Institute (MBI), Technology Services & Security; Please register to receive updates on scheduling [here](#).

Economic Development

FREE Education and Training through OIG

BRPC's Economic Development staff are working with the MA Office of the Inspector General to provide Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official (MCPPO) [courses and other training](#) to Berkshire County municipal leadership **at no charge to your community**. Classes can include MCPPO Designation/Designation Renewal, or MCPPO Electives including Chapter 30B Exemptions, Chapter 30B Terms/Practices, Contract Administration, Cybersecurity, IFP and RFP Workshop, Real Property Transactions, and others.

Please **CONTACT US** if you, your staff, or your board/committee leadership are interested in participating in a Fall 2022 class. Email lbrennan@berkshireplanning.org with "OIG" in the subject line.



Berkshire Small Business Resource Expo
Tuesday, August 9th, 8:30am to 1pm
Stationery Factory, 63 Flansburg Ave., Dalton

Join the Berkshire business community for a chock-full morning of panels, exhibits, and networking opportunities. Over 25 organizations will be on our exhibit floor with information about resources, grants, training, and support for small businesses. Never before all in the same place! Free breakfast and lunch included. [Registration](#) required.

[Register Now](#)

The Berkshire Small Business Resource Expo is presented by:
**EforAll Berkshire County, 1Berkshire, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission ,
MountainOne, The Berkshire Eagle, and TD Bank**
And made possible with sponsored support by: **Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corp
and Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation**

Planning Toolkit Available Online

Two-page tip sheets 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. Check out the new [Planning Toolkit](#) and if there's an additional topic you'd like us to cover, let us know! Please email [Laura Brennan](#).

Environmental & Energy

604b Grant Opportunity

Massachusetts Dept. of Environmental Protection has released a Request for Responses for the 2022 Clean Water Act Section 604b Grant Cycle. This is a *no match required* grant opportunity for municipalities to address stormwater pollution. Grant funds can cover the cost of water quality pollution studies, conceptual engineering designs for stormwater infrastructure, watershed-based plans, and more. To find out more about the grant check out the [MassDEP website here](#) (scroll down to 604b).

BRPC has funds to work with municipalities to develop a project, write a grant application, and manage the project on your behalf from project implementation to grant administration. If you're interested, email or call [Courteny Morehouse](#), 413-442-1521 x26 or [Melissa Provencher](#), x22. We'd love to work with you!

Level 1 Mild Drought in the Berkshires

Due to 2 months of below normal rainfall, a mild, level 1 drought has been declared for Berkshire County. Mild drought is not completely unusual however, we should still be aware of how we can help mitigate our water use and alleviate strain on our water systems. While it's hard to attribute any one weather event to climate change, this is in line with climate predictions for Western Massachusetts. Droughts are expected to become more frequent while our rain events are expected to come on stronger, with more rain in each storm.

If you are a heavily forested community with dry tinder, take care to watch for wildfires, and advise outdoor recreation to be fire conscious. To help conserve water, we encourage everyone to limit watering outside to once a week between the hours of 5 pm and 9 am, check emergency connections, limit new landscaping and outdoor washing, and encourage residents to use low-flow, water-conserving appliances or techniques both indoors and out. If you haven't already done so, consider developing a local drought plan for your water supply, and stay cool!

Residents and Businesses:

- Toilets, faucets, and showers are more than 60% of indoor use. Make sure yours are [WaterSense](#) efficient.

Immediate Steps for Communities:

- Adopt and implement the state's nonessential outdoor water use restrictions for drought.
- Limit or prohibit installation of new sod, seeding, and/or landscaping; watering during or within 48 hours after measurable rainfall; washing of hard surfaces (sidewalks, patios, driveways, siding); personal vehicle or boat washing; filling of swimming pools.
- Establish water-use reduction targets for all water users and identify top water users, and conduct targeted outreach to help curb their use.

Short- and Medium-Term Steps for Communities:

- Establish a year-round water conservation program that includes public education and

communication.

- Provide timely information to local residents and businesses.
- Implement or establish drought surcharge or seasonal water rates.
- Check emergency inter-connections for water supply.
- Develop a local drought management plan using guidance outlined in the state [Drought Management Plan](#).

Regional Services

Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership (MTWP)

For residents of Adams, Cheshire, Clarksburg, Florida, New Ashford, North Adams, Peru, Savoy, Williamstown, and Windsor

Since 2013, the MTWP has sought to bring recognition and additional financial and technical resources to 21 municipalities in northwestern Massachusetts (the MTWP region) to increase natural resource-based economic development. MTWP is updating its 10-year plan (2023-2033) and seeks comments and feedback from the public. Share your ideas and suggestions for ways the Woodlands Partnership could support your town by attending a virtual Zoom listening session or posting comments on the website.

Wednesday, August 24, 4 pm
Wednesday, September 14, 7 pm

To register, RSVP via email to [Sophie Argetsinger](#), MTWP Assistant. Access the draft Partnership Plan and comments portal on the MTWP website at: mohawktrailwoodlandspartnership.org

Transportation



Berkshire Flyer Pilot Running Smoothly

The [Berkshire Flyer](#) pilot, a weekend train service connecting New York City and the Berkshires launched on July 8 with a successful inaugural run that will continue through September 5, 2022. The pilot train departs from New York Penn Station at 3:16 pm on Fridays and arrives at Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center in Pittsfield at 7:12 pm. Departure from Pittsfield is at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday and arrival in New York City is 7:05 p.m. The Berkshire Flyer is a two-year pilot service running for the summers of 2022 and 2023 to test the demand for this route. In 2023 the pilot service will run from Memorial Day weekend in May to the Indigenous People's / Columbus Day weekend in October.

Berkshire Flyer is vital for the economic development of Berkshire County. After 51 years, Berkshire County has been connected directly with New York City via train. This train service improves transportation connections and is a gateway for Berkshire County's future growth.

The first three weeks of the trains have been sold out. The riders' surveys show that they are here for various purposes: to attend art & cultural events and to enjoy the natural beauty and adventures that Berkshire County has in abundance. The Berkshire Flyer riders are of all age groups, from millennials to older adults, some new and some visiting again as it is convenient to ride the Berkshire Flyer train. The Berkshires has it all for everyone; an oasis of natural beauty, art, and culture; a perfect weekend getaway for New York City residents!

The Berkshire Flyer also improves transportation connections for Berkshire residents. It provides a train connection between Pittsfield, Albany/Rensselaer, and other NY destinations. Book your ticket, hop on the Berkshire Flyer train, relax, and enjoy the scenic view along the trip!

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
www.berkshireplanning.org



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