

RTP2024

BERKSHIRE COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

**Long-Range Transportation Plan for the
Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization
FY 2024 - 2044**



2024
Berkshire Regional Transportation Plan



Effective October 1, 2023

Prepared by:

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The Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization authorizes the Chairman to endorse the FFY 2024-2044 RTP document on their behalf


Gina Fiandaca
MassDOT Secretary and CEO
Chair, Berkshire MPO

7/25/23
Date

CERTIFICATION OF THE BERKSHIRE MPO TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS

310 CMR 60.05: Global Warming Solutions Act Requirements for the Transportation Sector and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation

This will certify that the Transportation Improvement Program and Air Quality Conformity Determination for the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is in compliance with all applicable requirements in the State Regulation 310 CMR 60.05: Global Warming Solutions Act.

Requirements for the Transportation Sector and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation. The regulation requires MPO to:

1. 310 CMR 60.05, 5(a)(1): Evaluate and report the aggregate transportation GHG emissions and impacts of RTPs and TIPs;
2. 310 CMR 60.05, 5(a)(2): In consultation with MassDOT, develop and utilize procedures to prioritize and select projects in RTPs and TIPs based on factors that include aggregate transportation GHG emissions impacts;
3. 310 CMR 60.05, 5(a)(3): Quantify net transportation GHG emissions impacts resulting from the projects in RTPs and TIPs and certify in a statement included with RTPs and TIPs pursuant to 23 CFR Part 450 that the MPO has made efforts to minimize aggregate transportation GHG emissions impacts;
4. 310 CMR 60.05, 5(a)(4): Determine in consultation with the RPA that the appropriate planning assumptions used for transportation GHG emissions modeling are consistent with local land use policies, or that local authorities have made documented and credible commitments to establishing such consistency;
5. 310 CMR 60.05, 8(a)(2)(a): Develop RTPs and TIPs;
6. 310 CMR 60.05, 8(a)(2)(b): Ensure that RPAs are using appropriate planning assumptions;
7. 310 CMR 60.05, 8(a)(2)(c): Perform regional aggregate transportation GHG emissions analysis of RTPs and TIPs;
8. 310 CMR 60.05, 8(a)(2)(d): Calculate aggregate transportation GHG emissions for RTPs and TIPs;
9. 310 CMR 60.05, 8(a)(2)(e): Develop public consultation procedures for aggregate transportation GHG reporting and related GWSA requirements consistent with current and approved regional public participation plans;
10. 310 CMR 60.05, 8(c): Prior to making final endorsements on the RTPs, TIPs, STIPs, and projects included in these plans, MassDOT and the MPOs shall include the aggregate transportation GHG emission impact assessment in RTPs, TIPs, and STIPs and provide an opportunity for public review and comment on the RTPs, TIPs, and STIPs.
11. 310 CMR 60.05, 8(a)(1)(c): After a final GHG assessment has been made by MassDOT and the MPOs, Mass DOT and the MPOs shall submit MPO-endorsed RTPs, TIPs or projects within 30 days of endorsement to the Department for review of the GHG assessment.

This is to certify that the members of the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) hereby endorse the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for Federal Fiscal Years 2024-2044, in accordance with 23 CFR Part 450 Section 324 of the October 28, 1993 Final Rules for Statewide and Metropolitan Planning and 23 CFR Part 450 Section 326. This RTP consists entirely of projects that are either: A) exempt from an air quality conformity determination as specified in 40 CFR Parts 51 and 93; or B) have been previously analyzed in the conforming Regional Transportation Plan for the Berkshire Region. This RTP does not add significant, non-exempt projects, nor reprogram any existing regionally significant, non-exempt projects across analysis years. In accordance with Section 176(c) (4) of the Clean Air Act as amended in 1990 (42 U.S.C. 7251 (a)), the MPO for the Berkshire Region has conducted its review and hereby certifies that the RTP conforms with 40 CFR Parts 51 and 93 (August 15, 1997) and 310 CMR 60.3 (December 30, 1994).


Gina Fiandaca
MassDOT Secretary and CEO
Chair, Berkshire MPO

7/25/23
Date

BERKSHIRE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION CERTIFICATION OF THE 3C PLANNING PROCESS

The Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization certifies that its conduct of the metropolitan transportation planning process complies with all applicable requirements, which are listed below, and that this process includes activities to support the development and implementation of the Regional Long-Range Transportation Plan and Air Quality Conformity Determination, the Transportation Improvement Program and Air Quality Conformity Determination, and the Unified Planning Work Program.

1. 23 USC 134, 49 USC 5303, and this subpart.
2. Sections 174 and 176 (c) and (d) of the Clean Air Act, as amended (42 USC 7504, 7506 (c) and (d) and 40 CFR part 93 and for applicable State Implementation Plan projects.
3. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 USC 2000d-1) and 49 CFR Part 21.
4. 49 USC 5332, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, or age in employment or business opportunity.
5. Section 1101 (b) of the Fast Act (Pub. L. 114-357) and 49 CFR Part 26 regarding the involvement of disadvantaged business enterprises in U.S. DOT-funded projects.
6. 23 CFR part 230, regarding implementation of an equal employment opportunity program on Federal and Federal-aid highway construction contracts.
7. The provisions of the US DOT and of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 USC 12101 et seq.) and 49 CFR Parts 27, 37, and 38.
8. The Older Americans Act, as amended (42 USC 6101), prohibiting discrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.
9. Section 324 of Title 23 USC regarding the prohibition of discrimination based on gender.
10. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC 794) and 49 CFR Part 27 regarding discrimination against individuals with disabilities.
11. Anti-lobbying restrictions found in 49 USC Part 20. No appropriated funds may be expended by a recipient to influence or attempt to influence an officer or employee of any agency, or a member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any federal contract.



Gina Fianduca
MassDOT Secretary and CEO
Chair, Berkshire MPO

7/25/23
Date

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS TO BENEFICIARIES

Federal "Title VI/Nondiscrimination" Protections

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) operates its programs, services, and activities in compliance with federal nondiscrimination laws including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and related statutes and regulations. Title VI prohibits discrimination in federally assisted programs and requires that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin (including limited English proficiency), be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal assistance. Related federal nondiscrimination laws administered by the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, or both prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, sex, and disability. These protected categories are contemplated within MassDOT's Title VI Programs consistent with federal interpretation and administration. Additionally, BRPC provides meaningful access to its programs, services, and activities to individuals with limited English proficiency, in compliance with US Department of Transportation policy and guidance on federal Executive Order 13166.

State Nondiscrimination Protections

BRPC also complies with the Massachusetts Public Accommodation Law, M.G.L. c 272 §§ 92a, 98, 98a, prohibiting making any distinction, discrimination, or restriction in admission to or treatment in a place of public accommodation based on race, color, religious creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or ancestry. Likewise, MassDOT complies with the Governor's Executive Order 526, section 4 requiring all programs, activities, and services provided, performed, licensed, chartered, funded, regulated, or contracted for by the state shall be conducted without unlawful discrimination based on race, color, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, creed, ancestry, national origin, disability, veteran's status (including Vietnam-era veterans), or background.

If you need help understanding this document because you do not speak English or have a disability which impacts your ability to read the text, please contact BRPC's Title VI Coordinator at (413) 442-1521 (voice) TTY: 711 or MA Relay System: 800-439-2370, 413-442-1523 (fax), or info@berkshireplanning.org (e-mail).

If you believe that you or anyone in a specific class of persons has been subjected to discrimination prohibited by Title VI and other nondiscrimination laws based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, or gender, you or your representative may file a complaint with BRPC, which we can help complete. A complaint must be filed no later than 180 days after the date of the alleged discrimination for Title VI complaints and no later than 300 days for state protected category complaints. If you require further information, please contact BRPC's Title VI Coordinator (see contact information above).

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If this information is needed in another language, please contact the BRPC's Title VI Coordinator at 413-442-1521.

Spanish

Si necesita esta información en otro idioma, por favor contacte al coordinador de BRPC's del Título VI al 413-442-1521.

Table of Contents

CLICK HEADINGS OR PAGE NUMBERS TO AUTOMATICALLY SCROLL TO DESIRED SECTIONS, WHEN VIEWING AS A PDF.

| | |
|---|------------|
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 8 |
| INTRODUCTION | 15 |
| PLANNING FRAMEWORK | 21 |
| Why a Long-Range Transportation Plan? | 22 |
| How to Use This Plan | 23 |
| Public Engagement..... | 24 |
| Alignment with Regional Data and Studies..... | 31 |
| Levels of Government in Transportation Planning..... | 38 |
| REGIONAL DATA & CONTEXT | 41 |
| About Berkshire County..... | 42 |
| Socioeconomic Data & Projections | 46 |
| Environmental Justice | 50 |
| Travel in the Region..... | 52 |
| Land Use..... | 56 |
| REGIONAL GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS | 61 |
| MAINTAIN A STATE OF GOOD REPAIR | 63 |
| 1a. Maintain Pavement Conditions..... | 64 |
| 1b. Maintain Bridge Conditions..... | 69 |
| 1c. Maintain Culvert and Stream Crossing Conditions..... | 72 |
| FOSTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | 75 |
| 2a. Grow Economic Opportunity through Transportation | 76 |
| 2b. Develop Scenic Byways | 78 |
| 2c. Support Freight and Airport Operation | 80 |
| EXPAND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICES & OPTIONS | 83 |
| 3a. Enhance Public Transportation..... | 84 |
| 3b. Expand Passenger Rail..... | 93 |
| 3c. Coordinate Transportation Services..... | 97 |
| INCREASE SAFETY AND SECURITY | 99 |
| 4a. Adopt the Safe Systems Approach..... | 100 |
| 4b. Continue Roadway Safety Audits and Countermeasures..... | 107 |
| 4c. Standardize Crash Data | 111 |
| PROMOTE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION | 113 |
| 5a. Expand Bicycle Infrastructure | 114 |
| 5b. Expand Pedestrian Infrastructure..... | 120 |
| 5c. Expand Shared Micromobility | 122 |
| ADAPT FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE | 125 |
| 6a. Highlight the Links Between Transportation and Public Health..... | 126 |
| 6b. Promote Electrification..... | 128 |
| 6c. Mitigate Impacts on Natural Habitats..... | 134 |
| FISCAL ANALYSIS | 139 |
| AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY AND GHG ANALYSIS | 159 |
| Berkshire Region MPO Air Quality Conformity Determination..... | 154 |
| APPENDIX | 167 |

List of Acronyms

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---|----------------------|---|
| 3-C | Continuous, Cooperative, Comprehensive | MBTA | Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority |
| AADT | Average Annual Daily Traffic | MDF | Most Determinant Factor |
| AASHTO | American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials | MGL | Massachusetts General Laws |
| AAQ | Ambient Air Quality | MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| ACS | American Community Survey | MPO | Metropolitan Planning Organization |
| BEV | Battery Electric Vehicle | MPP | Municipal Pavement Program |
| BIL | Bipartisan Infrastructure Law | MTA | (NY) Metropolitan Transit Authority |
| BRI | (Mass.) Short-span Bridge | NAACC | North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative |
| BRPC | Berkshire Regional Planning Commission | NBI | National Bridge Inventory |
| BRCCOT | Berkshire Regional Coordinating Council on Transportation | NHS | National Highway System |
| BRTA | Berkshire Regional Transit Authority | NHTSA | National Highway Transportation Safety Administration |
| CDL | Commercial Driver's License | NOx | Nitrogen Oxide |
| CDTA | Capital District Transit Authority | NRSS | National Roadway Safety Strategy |
| CEDS | Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy | NYSDOT | New York State Department of Transportation |
| CHST | Coordinated Human Services Transportation (Plan) | OSRP | Open Space and Recreation Plan |
| CIP | Capital Investment Plan | OTS | (MassDOT) Office of Traffic Safety |
| CMR | Code of Massachusetts Regulations | PASER | Pavement Asphalt Surface Evaluation Rating |
| CO | Carbon Monoxide | PCI | Pavement Condition Index |
| COA | Council on Aging | PEL | Planning and Environmental Linkages |
| CRP | Carbon Reduction Plan | PM | Performance Measure/Particulate Matter |
| CSAP | Comprehensive Safety Action Plan | PSI | Present Serviceability Index |
| DOD | Department of Defense | PVPC | Pioneer Valley Planning Commission |
| DPU | (Mass.) Department of Public Utilities | PVTA | Pioneer Valley Transit Authority |
| EDDM | Every Door Direct Mail | ROUTES | Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success |
| EJ | Environmental Justice | ROW | Right-of-Way |
| EOEEA | (Mass.) Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs | SHSP | Strategic Highway Safety Plan |
| EPA | Environmental Protection Agency | TIP | Transportation Improvement Program |
| EPDO | Equivalent Property Damage Only | TNC | Transportation Network Company |
| EST | Empire State Trail | UPWP | Unified Planning Work Program |
| EV | Electric Vehicle | UMDI | UMass Donahue Institute |
| FARS | Fatality Analysis and Reporting System | USDOT | United States Department of Transportation |
| FAST Act | Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act | REJ+ | Regional Environmental Justice Plus |
| FHWA | Federal Highway Administration | RMV | Registry of Motor Vehicles |
| FLMA | Federal Land Management Authority | RPA | Regional Planning Agency |
| FTA | Federal Transit Administration | RRFB | Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacon |
| FRA | Federal Railroad Administration | RSA | Road Safety Audit |
| GHG | Greenhouse Gas | RTA | Regional Transportation Authority |
| GIS | Geographic Information System | RTP | Regional Transportation Plan |
| GPS | Global Positioning System | SRAHNET | Strategic Highway Network |
| HSIP | Highway Safety Improvement Plan | STRAP | Small Town Road Assistance Program |
| ITC | Intermodal Transportation Center | SWOT | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats |
| ITE | Institute of Transportation Engineers | VOC | Volatile Organic Compound |
| JLT | Jacob's Ladder Trail | VMT | Vehicle Miles Traveled |
| LF | Linear Feet | VPI | Virtual Public Involvement |
| LRTP | Long-Range Transportation Plan | VRM | Vehicle Revenue Miles |
| MAP-21 | Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century | WNEG | Western New England Greenway |
| MassDOT | Massachusetts Department of Transportation | | |

Executive Summary

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) lays the groundwork for transportation investments in Berkshire County for the next twenty years. BRPC planning staff have spent the past year conducting outreach to stakeholders around the Berkshires, gathering the latest socioeconomic and demographic data for the region, and working with state and federal partners to craft an investment road map for our transportation assets.

This *RTP2024* document distills the data, feedback, and budgets that have been gathered, and recommends projects, programs, and planning staff activities that will complement and enhance Berkshire County's transportation infrastructure. The goals of this document are to address existing gaps identified in our infrastructure and to look to the future with recommendations to modernize our assets where most relevant.

This document is an update to the previous RTP, completed in 2020. Every four years, an updated Long Range Transportation Plan, such as this RTP, must be filed with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in order for the region to remain eligible for federal highway dollars. Along with project and programmatic recommendations, the RTP also re-certifies the legal standing of the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (BMPO), a decision-making body comprised of elected officials or appointees from around the region.

Finally, the RTP document certifies the region's Air Quality standards conformity and demonstrates a fiscally constrained budget for transportation project planning. For more details about these about these items, along with where to find them in the RTP, please see **Chapter 2 - Planning Framework**.

Vision Statement

This RTP will work to achieve a long-term vision for Berkshire County where:

- ◆ People of all ages and abilities can move around the region in a safe and efficient way.
- ◆ Our transportation infrastructure is safe, reliable, and in a state of good repair, with zero fatalities and serious injuries on our roads.

- ◆ City and town centers are vibrant places of activity with attractive choices available to walk, cycle, take transit or drive to destinations.
- ◆ Residents feel empowered to be good stewards of our transportation system and infrastructure.
- ◆ Planning and feedback between decision makers and stakeholders is continuous, comprehensive and cooperative.
- ◆ Opportunities to innovate are identified and pursued when possible.
- ◆ Our transportation system is sustainable: environmentally, economically, and socially.
- ◆ Natural habitats are protected and supported by our infrastructure and negative externalities are minimized to the greatest extent.
- ◆ The quality of our infrastructure is competitive and attractive for prospective residents, businesses and visitors, and supportive of our established neighborhoods and industries.

Public Participation Insights

As part of the Public Participation goals of the RTP project, an online survey was published which invited Berkshire residents to share their views about the transportation system. Below are key data points gathered from aggregated survey responses, along with insights into what the data could mean for future planning work. Please see the **Public Engagement** section in **Chapter 2** for a more detailed breakdown of survey findings, and the **Appendix** for all survey data and comments that were gathered.

Data: Most respondents (85%) said they see themselves **living in the Berkshires** 5 years from now.

Insight: We are making investments for residents who are living here today and will be in the future.

Data: The highest proportion of respondents saw themselves living in a **detached house on a large lot** in the next stage of their life.

Insight: Rural lifestyles are prevalent in the Berkshires, and transportation planning should account for how to support that complementary infrastructure.

Data: A majority of respondents (88%) said they used a **personal vehicle** as their primary means of travel around the county.

Insight: Our region relies heavily on personal automobile ownership for mobility.

Data: Most respondents **did not indicate satisfaction** with various components of our transportation system.

Insight: There is work still to be done in the areas of maintenance, safety, accessibility, sustainability, active transportation, and transit.

Data: Lack of pedestrian infrastructure, lack of bike paths/lanes, and bus availability were the **top three challenges** selected by respondents.

Insight: There is regional appetite for a more connected pedestrian/bicycle network, and more availability of mass transportation.

Data: The **top-ranked budget priorities** from respondents were maintenance, improving public transit, safety, better bicycle/pedestrian facilities, and new technology enhancements

Insight: Planning for future transportation investments should include improvements to existing infrastructure while keeping pace with new technologies as they evolve.

Data: The most respondents (42%) desired to see **transit connections made to neighboring systems**, such as CDTA in Albany and PVRTA in the Pioneer Valley. 79 percent of respondents said they **would likely use regional rail** connections.

Insight: Investments in regional connections could be attractive to residents wanting to visit other amenities or services.

Summary of Regional Socioeconomic Trends

Our regional population is declining and is expected to continue doing so.

Between 2000 and 2020, the Berkshire County population declined from 135,000 people to 129,000. By 2040 the population is projected to be around 122,500.

Our population is aging but this trend will shift over the next two decades.

Between 2020 and 2025, the age 65-69 age bracket is projected to contain the highest proportion of Berkshire County residents. By 2040, the

age 45-49 bracket is projected to be the highest proportion as the baby boom generation reaches its average life expectancy.

Our households are less wealthy than those in other parts of the state.

According to 2021 ACS estimates, the median household income for Berkshire County was \$60,749, compared to \$89,645 for Massachusetts as a whole. Berkshire County has a higher rate of child poverty within its population (15.6%) than of Massachusetts as a whole (12.6%).

Transportation Financing

Over the planning horizon from 2024-2044, the Berkshire MPO is expected to have a budget of approximately \$737.6 million, otherwise known as the Regional Target. The investments that are recommended and programmed under this plan must demonstrate that they are “fiscally constrained” within this target funding. See **Chapter 5 - Fiscal Constraint Analysis** for more information about the types of funding available for transportation projects in Berkshire County.

Long-Range Goals and Recommendations

The RTP2024 lists six major goals along with objectives recommended that will work to achieve those goals. See **Chapter 4 - Regional Goals and Recommendations** for a detailed breakdown of each of these items.

- 1. Maintain a State of Good Repair***
- 2. Foster Economic Development***
- 3. Enhance Transportation Services and Options***
- 4. Increase Safety and Security***
- 5. Promote Active Transportation***
- 6. Adapt for Sustainability and Resilience***

Within these goals and objectives are recommended projects, programs and activities that will advance efforts toward achieving them. Some are specific projects that have an estimated dollar figure applied, while others are more conceptual or consist of staff activities that may be placed on the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). All recommendations are summarized in the tables that follow.

2024 RTP Goals, Objectives and Recommendations

Goal 1. Maintain a State of Good Repair

► Objective 1a. Maintain Pavement Conditions

Recommended Projects:

Pittsfield: Route 7 (First Street) between East Street and Tyler Street: Approx. 3,800 LF of road reconstruction, bike/ped and ADA improvements, signal replacements, and other safety improvements. Estimated cost: \$6,000,000

Adams: Bucklin Road from Cheshire town line to Walling Road; East Road from Walling Road to Upper E Hoosac Street: Approx 2.1 miles of road rehabilitation. Estimated cost: \$1,100,000

Adams: West Road from Reservoir Road to Gould Road: Approx. 2.1 miles of road rehabilitation. Estimated cost: \$1,100,000

Lanesborough: Summer Street from Old Cheshire Road to Old State Road: Approx 6,500 LF of reconstruction. Estimated cost: \$563,000

Cheshire: Lanesboro Road from Lanesborough town line to Route 8: Approx 1.85 miles of road reconstruction. Estimated cost: \$849,000

Sheffield: County Road from Hickey Hill Road to New Marlborough line: Approx. 1.5 miles of reconstruction. Estimated cost: \$893,120

► Objective 1b. Maintain Bridge Conditions

Recommended UPWP Activities:

Report yearly to MPO on changes in bridge condition

Assist communities in obtaining up to date bridge data

Coordinate with municipalities as needed in navigating bridge funding opportunities

► Objective 1c. Maintain Culvert and Stream Crossing Conditions

Recommended UPWP Activities:

Continue gathering data for culverts that have yet to be assessed

Coordinate with local highway departments to prioritize culvert repairs or replacements, and find ways to streamline the process in concert with other road maintenance work

Encourage more towns to assess their stream crossings through the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program

Research and share the latest culvert design standards that support adequate water flow and wildlife connectivity

Goal 2. Foster Economic Development

► Objective 2a. Grow Economic Opportunity through Transportation

Recommended Programs:

Bottleneck analysis and pavement management activities related to development of the Greylock Glen site

Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) feasibility study along Route 7 in central Pittsfield

Trip generation and demand study for large-scale regional attractions and events

Continued transition toward vehicle electrification and reducing VMTs through demand management and land use controls

► Objective 2b. Develop Scenic Byways

Recommended UPWP Activities:

Continue staff support for JLTSB, Inc. activities such as board meetings and communication

Perform duties as Clerk of the board including meeting minutes, annual report filing, and outreach as necessary

Provide technical support where needed for transportation-related initiatives along the corridor

Explore a re-connection with PVPC for initiatives that take place in Hampden County

Monitor for funding opportunities that are within the capacity of the Scenic Byway team

Maintain relationships with MassDOT and the Scenic Byways liaison

Maintain relationships with Berkshire towns along the Byway to solicit monetary and in-kind contributions for Byway work efforts

► Objective 2c. Support Freight and Airport Operation

Recommended Projects:

Pittsfield: Reconstruction of Hubbard Avenue rail overpass. Estimated cost: \$15-20 million

Pittsfield Municipal Airport: Major rehabilitation of taxiways. Estimated cost: \$11,000,000 (note: cannot be budgeted with highway funds)

Walter J. Koladza Airport: Rehabilitation of runway. Estimated cost: \$3,232,000. (note: cannot be budgeted with highway funds)

North Adams: Herriman-and-West Airport gateway enhancements at Route 2 intersection. Estimated cost: \$1 million

Goal 3. Expand Public Transportation Services & Options

► Objective 3a. Enhance Public Transportation

Recommended Projects:

Implement microtransit service in additional areas of Berkshire County. Estimated cost: \$4,200,000

North and South County transit hub locations, including vehicle storage and staging. Estimated cost: \$1,500,000 per hub

Run fixed-route services at 30-minute headways for daytime hours. Estimated cost: \$24,000,000

Recommended Programs:

Explore updated transit fare structure including free or reduced general fare

Explore increasing BRTA Member Communities to towns in the region who have yet to join

Explore fixed-route services to more towns in the region and connections to neighboring transit systems, such as via Route 143, Route 9, or Route 116 east to Franklin and Hampshire County.

Develop a feasibility roadmap for fleet replacement using alternative-fuel vehicles as opportunities arise

► Objective 3b. Expand Passenger Rail

Recommended Projects:

Continued operation of the Berkshire Flyer service, with potential assimilation into East-West Rail service west of Pittsfield. Estimated cost: \$750,000 per year

East-West passenger rail connection through Berkshire County. Estimated cost: \$2.4-4.6 billion statewide

Expanded passenger facilities at the Intermodal Transportation Center including 1000-ft track siding and level boarding platform. Estimated cost: \$6 million

Explore a pilot program of passenger rail service along the Housatonic Line from Pittsfield to Great Barrington. Estimated cost: \$62,400,000

Recommended UPWP Activities:

Continue to participate in efforts to assess the feasibility of Northern Tier passenger rail to North Adams

Study last-mile solutions to bring passengers to and from the ITC for rail transportation

► Objective 3c. Coordinate Transportation Services

Recommended UPWP Activities:

Implement recommendations of the CHST 2023 updates as resources become available

Develop a dementia-friendly Berkshires framework for guiding public works projects and transportation improvements

Explore the benefits of a regional mobility manager who could centralize mobility services for Berkshire constituents

Continue convening the Berkshire Regional Coordinating Council on Transportation (BRCCOT) to assess accessibility needs in the region

Pursue opportunities to leverage the MassDOT Community Transit Grant Program

Goal 4. Increase Safety and Security

► Objective 4a. Adopt the Safe Systems approach

Recommended UPWP Activities:

Implement a Berkshire County Comprehensive Safety Action Plan

Report yearly to MPO on changes to crash cluster and HSIP data

Report yearly on Performance Measure 1 (PM1) data to MPO and MassDOT

Assist in developing low-cost, expandable traffic calming solutions

Assist in developing bylaws and guidelines which promote effective access management

► Objective 4b. Continue roadway safety audits and countermeasures

Recommended UPWP Activities:

Coordinate with Berkshire County towns with HSIP-eligible crash clusters to program further study and implement countermeasures

Coordinate with MassDOT on RSAs (Road Safety Audits) to be conducted at top crash locations in the region

Prioritize future year HSIP projects

Identification of other potential safety improvements at crash clusters

Explore modernization and updates to a regional crash database

► Objective 4c. Standardize crash data

Recommended UPWP Activities:

Analyze the rates of crash reporting and geocoding for Berkshire municipalities

Conduct ongoing outreach with the MassDOT Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) and RMV

Conduct ongoing outreach to town police and first response units in partnership with OTS

Goal 5. Promote Active Transportation

► Objective 5a. Expand Bicycle infrastructure

Recommended Projects:

- Ashuwillticook Rail Trail extension: Hodges Cross Rd to Western Gateway Heritage State Park. Estimated cost: \$10,000,000
- North Adams: Adventure Trail from Williamstown town line to Western Gateway Heritage State Park. Estimated cost: \$15,000,000
- Great Barrington-Sheffield multi-use path. Estimated cost: \$16,000,000
- Williamstown Bike/Hike Path northern extension: Syndicate Road to VT state line. Estimated cost: \$3,200,000
- Lenox Bikeway Phase 1: Lee town line to Willow Creek Road. Estimated cost: \$3,500,000
- Lenox Bikeway Phase 2: Willow Creek Road to New Lenox road. Estimated cost: \$7,000,000
- Lenox/Pittsfield Connector Bikeway: New Lenox Road to Holmes Road. Estimated cost: \$4,000,000
- Lee Bikeway Phase 2: Downtown Lee to Lenox town line. Estimated cost: \$5,000,000

Recommended UPWP Activities:

- Continue to provide support to communities on Berkshire Bike Path implementation.
- Continue to provide technical support to Berkshire Bike Path Council (BBPC) and Bike North Berkshires including the provision of GIS-related services.
- Identify gaps in bicycle networks and develop a quality of service/bikability index
- Coordinate with MassDOT on U.S. Bike Route 7 signage installation
- Continue identifying priority areas for on-road cycling improvements and pedestrian enhancements, including best practices based on land use context
- Participate in Bay State Bike Week and Western New England Greenway initiatives
- Continue to support communities on general Complete Streets planning and implementation, including sidewalk inventories and walkability/bikability assessments
- Coordinate with MassDOT and municipalities on implementation of state Pedestrian and Bike Plans
- Maintain and report on an inventory of bicycle facilities in the region

► Objective 5b. Expand Pedestrian infrastructure

Recommended Projects:

- Route 7, Pittsfield: Approx. 3,200 LF of sidewalk to close the gap between MP 28.2 and MP 28.8 (Dan Fox Drive). Estimated cost: \$1,200,000
- Route 7/20, Lenox: Approx. 950 LF of sidewalk to connect isolated bus stops south of the intersection with New Lenox Road, including crosswalk upgrades at existing signal. Estimated cost: \$2,200,000
- Crane Avenue, Pittsfield: Approx. 550 LF of sidewalk and crosswalks in the vicinity of 898 Crane Ave, the Allendale Shopping Center, and the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail trailhead. Estimated cost: \$213,000
- East Street, Pittsfield: Construct a raised crossing at the existing crosswalk immediately east of Park Square. Estimated cost: \$100,000
- West Street/Government Drive, Pittsfield: Sidewalk extension or other pedestrian accommodations on Government Drive and College Way. Estimated cost: \$3,000,000

Recommended UPWP Activities:

- Conduct sidewalk inventory and gap analysis in Berkshire County
- Conduct walkshed analysis in Berkshire County
- Conduct an inventory of crosswalks in Berkshire County and categorize their current conditions and other characteristics
- Recommend priority crossings within the Urbanized Area and Urban Clusters in Berkshire County for enhancement
- Study how to utilize existing Roadsoft software to build the crosswalk inventory
- Collaborate with local Departments of Public Works and MassDOT to promulgate best practices for crosswalk installation in a standard way around the county

► Objective 5c. Expand Shared micromobility

Recommendations:

- Target: Implement or pilot shared micromobility options (i.e. bike share or e-scooter share) in the Phase 1 host cities identified.

Goal 6. Adapt for Sustainability and Resilience

► Objective 6a. Highlight the Links Between Transportation and Public Health

Recommended UPWP Activities:

- Conduct a special study of land use and public health indicators in Berkshire County
- Consider how to incorporate addiction recovery and prevention into CHST initiatives
- Incorporate measurable public health goals into transportation planning activities
- Collaborate with Public Health and substance recovery organizations to learn how the transportation system can better serve those seeking recovery
- Document how the infrastructure in our region can be adapted to encourage more in-person connections, outdoor recreation, exercise, and public engagement

► Objective 6b. Promote Electrification

Recommended Programs:

- Establish a Berkshire regional EV charging station working group, including leadership from local governments and industries such as electrical distributors and suppliers
- Work with municipalities on installing publicly-accessible L2 charging infrastructure in parking areas such as curbsides and municipal parking lots
- Conduct a benefit-cost analysis of adapting local bus fleets such as BRTA and PPS to alternative-fuel buses

Recommended UPWP Activities:

- Work with regional employers and tourism destinations to assist with EV charging station awareness, planning, financing and implementation
- Continue collaboration with regional bus operators to pursue reductions in tailpipe emissions from transit vehicles.
- Establish a community liaison or partner to provide a starting-off point for interested stakeholders, communicate with local utility providers, and advocate to policy makers about the needs of Berkshire County to continue EV adoption
- Collaborate with designated Green Communities in Berkshire County to leverage Green Communities grant funding for the acquisition of EV charging equipment
- Encourage municipalities to adopt electric vehicle fleets

► Objective 6c. Mitigate Impacts on Natural Habitats

Recommended UPWP Activities:

- Continue collaboration with BRPC's Environmental Planning program as well as partners like Housatonic Valley Association, Greenagers, Mass Audubon, and the Nature Conservancy to identify key culverts and wildlife crossing points
- Advocate for increased funding and technical resources for culvert and stream crossing infrastructure that will be upgraded to modern stream crossing standards
- Continue updating the inventory of culverts in Berkshire County and their AOP ratings





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Introduction

| | |
|--|-----------|
| GOALS OF THE LONG-RANGE PLAN | 16 |
| FEDERAL AND STATE PLANNING PRIORITIES | 17 |
| ABOUT THE BERKSHIRE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION..... | 19 |

Goals of the Regional Transportation Plan

This Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is one of three Certification Documents for the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). In order to demonstrate that the Berkshire Region is planning its transportation network in a continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive manner, the organization publishes these documents for the public and for regulators to review.

Below are the overall goals of the RTP and summaries on what they intend to accomplish. Each goal and objective will be incorporated into planning products such as the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) or the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). In **Chapter 4**, each objective will be broken out into project or policy recommendations, as well as planning staff activities related to achieving that goal.

MAINTAIN A STATE OF GOOD REPAIR

The maintenance of our existing transportation infrastructure and services is a core function of our local government. Properly maintained infrastructure leads to a reliable transportation system where all people can get around with safety, predictability and dignity. Many of the recommended projects in this plan address maintenance and enhancement of our existing transportation assets.

FOSTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Transportation is a key influencer of economic opportunity for residential, commercial, and industrial sectors. This plan recommends investments in getting residents better connected with regional employers, as well as investing in infrastructure that promotes spending in the region, such as our scenic byways, highways, and airports.

ENHANCE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICES AND OPTIONS

Mass transit is an essential component of any regional transportation system. It is an efficient way of moving many people between points of interest. There are challenges that come with implementing transit well in a rural area. The funding mechanisms by which transit agencies are largely supported do not cover the full needs of the region. Agencies like the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA), Amtrak, and regional service providers are

leveraging innovations of the 21st century to help make transit more competitive despite these challenges, and they are helping to reduce the transportation sector's greenhouse gas emissions and make Berkshire County accessible to all.

INCREASE SAFETY AND SECURITY

For the past decade, traffic fatalities and serious injuries have been rising in the United States, after dropping dramatically beginning in the 1970s. As other industrialized nations worldwide have been continuing to reduce their traffic casualties, North America has frustratingly moved in the opposite direction. The factors contributing to this trend are complex. This plan recommends an all-of-government Safe Systems roll-out and targeted investment in addressing known safety issues via a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan.

PROMOTE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Active transportation is an important component of the sustainability of any transportation network. Infrastructure for active transportation is generally less costly than for heavy traffic. Transportation via active means produces less greenhouse gas emission than heavy modes. Finally, active transportation can build a greater degree of community and social cohesion and investment when implemented as a wide-reaching network. An ongoing goal of the region is to complete the Berkshire Bike Path. Local investments in city and town center pedestrian and bike infrastructure will also encourage a greater mix of trip modes.

ADAPT FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

A sustainable system is more than being "green." It is ensuring that the needs of the future are accounted for in planning happening today. It is ensuring that our air, water and soil are not compromised to the detriment of the next generation, which is a stark reality for many longtime Berkshire County residents. Reducing greenhouse gas emission is one important component of planning for sustainability. Reducing the impact of our infrastructure on natural habitats and ecosystems via stormwater best management practices, reducing paved surfaces, providing wildlife linkages, and electrifying our modes of travel are all urgent needs that should be addressed over the next twenty years.

Federal and State Planning Priorities

Coordination with State and Federal partners is an integral component of a comprehensive transportation plan. Below are the eight emphasis areas that the Federal Highway Administration recommends for regions to incorporate where possible into their Long Range Transportation Plans, followed by MassDOT emphasis areas for the Commonwealth's transportation network.

FEDERAL PLANNING EMPHASIS AREAS

Tackling the Climate Crisis - Transition to a Clean Energy, Resilient Future

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) divisions and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regional offices should work with State departments of transportation (State DOT), metropolitan planning organizations (MPO), and providers of public transportation to ensure that our transportation plans and infrastructure investments help achieve the national greenhouse gas reduction goals of 50-52 percent below 2005 levels by 2030, and net-zero emissions by 2050, and increase resilience to extreme weather events and other disasters resulting from the increasing effects of climate change.

Equity and Justice⁴⁰ in Transportation Planning

FHWA encourages the use of strategies that: (1) improve infrastructure for non-motorized travel, public transportation access, and increased public transportation service in underserved communities; (2) plan for the safety of all road users, particularly those on arterials, through infrastructure improvements and advanced speed management; (3) reduce single-occupancy vehicle travel and associated air pollution in communities near high-volume corridors; (4) offer reduced public transportation fares as appropriate; (5) target demand-response service towards communities with higher concentrations of older adults and those with poor access to essential services; and (6) consider equitable and sustainable practices while developing transit-oriented development including affordable housing strategies and consideration of environmental justice populations.

Complete Streets

A complete street is safe, and feels safe, for

everyone using the street. FHWA and FTA seek to help Federal aid recipients plan, develop, and operate streets and networks that prioritize safety, comfort, and access to destinations for people who use the street network, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, micro-mobility users, freight delivery services, and motorists. The goal is to provide an equitable and safe transportation network for travelers of all ages and abilities, including those from marginalized communities facing historic disinvestment. This vision is not achieved through a one-size-fits-all solution – each complete street is unique and developed to best serve its community context and its primary role in the network.

Public Involvement

Early, effective, and continuous public involvement brings diverse viewpoints into the decision-making process. Decision makers are encouraged to increase meaningful public involvement in transportation planning by integrating Virtual Public Involvement (VPI) tools into the overall public involvement approach while ensuring continued public participation by individuals without access to computers and mobile devices. The use of VPI broadens the reach of information to the public and makes participation more convenient and affordable to greater numbers of people. Virtual tools provide increased transparency and access to transportation planning activities and decision-making processes. Many virtual tools also provide information in visual and interactive formats that enhance public and stakeholder understanding of proposed plans, programs, and projects. Increasing participation earlier in the process can reduce project delays and lower staff time and costs.

Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET)/ U.S. Dept of Defense Coordination

Regional and state agencies are encouraged to coordinate with representatives from DOD in the transportation planning and project programming process on infrastructure and connectivity needs for STRAHNET routes and other public roads that connect to DOD facilities. According to the Declaration of Policy in 23 U.S.C. 101(b)(1), it is in the national interest to accelerate construction of the Federal-aid highway system, including the Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, because many of the highways (or portions of the highways) are inadequate to meet the needs of national and civil defense. The

DOD's facilities include military bases, ports, and depots. The road networks that provide access and connections to these facilities are essential to national security. The 64,200-mile STRAHNET system consists of public highways that provide access, continuity, and emergency transportation of personnel and equipment in times of peace and war. It includes the entire 48,482 miles of the Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways and 14,000 miles of other non-Interstate public highways on the National Highway System. The STRAHNET also contains approximately 1,800 miles of connector routes linking more than 200 military installations and ports to the primary highway system. The DOD's facilities are also often major employers in a region, generating substantial volumes of commuter and freight traffic on the transportation network and around entry points to the military facilities.

Federal Land Management Agency (FLMA) Coordination

MPOs and State DOTs are encouraged to coordinate with FLMAs in the transportation planning and project programming process on infrastructure and connectivity needs related to access routes and other public roads and transportation services that connect to Federal lands. Through joint coordination, the State DOTs, MPOs, Tribal Governments, FLMAs, and local agencies should focus on integration of their transportation planning activities and develop cross-cutting State and MPO long range transportation plans, programs, and corridor studies, as well as the Office of Federal Lands Highway's developed transportation plans and programs.

Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL)

State DOTs, MPOs and Public Transportation Agencies are encouraged to implement PEL as part of the transportation planning and environmental review processes. The use of PEL is a collaborative and integrated approach to transportation decision-making that considers environmental, community, and economic goals early in the transportation planning process, and uses the information, analysis, and products developed during planning to inform the environmental review process. PEL leads to inter-agency relationship building among planning, resource, and regulatory agencies in the early stages of planning to inform and improve project delivery timeframes, including minimizing duplication and creating one cohesive flow of

information. This results in transportation programs and projects that serve the community's transportation needs more effectively while avoiding and minimizing the impacts on human and natural resources.

Data in Transportation Planning

State DOTs, MPOs, and providers of public transportation are encouraged to incorporate data sharing and consideration into the transportation planning process, because data assets have value across multiple programs. Data sharing principles and data management can be used for a variety of issues, such as freight, bike and pedestrian planning, equity analyses, managing curb space, performance management, travel time reliability, connected and autonomous vehicles, mobility services, and safety. Developing and advancing data sharing principles allows for efficient use of resources and improved policy and decisionmaking at the State, MPO, regional, and local levels for all parties.

Recommendations, goals, and objectives in this RTP document incorporate as many of these emphasis area as practicable and relevant. As part of the 3-C regional planning process, coordination and cooperation with Berkshire MPO's partner agencies at MassDOT and FHWA will be a vital part of the successful outcomes for the region's goals. See the **Local, State, and Federal Coordination** section in Chapter 2 to learn more about the different agencies involved in transportation planning.

MASSDOT LONG-RANGE EMPHASIS AREAS

MassDOT is developing a statewide long-range transportation plan concurrently with state Regional Planning Agencies: Beyond Mobility 2050. The plan is emphasizing the following focus areas:

- ◆ Climate Change
- ◆ Future-of-Work
- ◆ People
- ◆ Places
- ◆ Prosperity
- ◆ Technology

The Long-Range Plan will be complete by the end of 2023, and those interested can receive updates at the Plan website: <https://beyond-mobility-massdot.hub.arcgis.com/>

About the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) and Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) fully comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statuses and regulations in all programs/activities and conducts its programs, services and activities in a non discriminatory manner.

The Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (BMPO) is responsible for conducting the federally required metropolitan transportation-planning process that is often referred to as the 3-C process: continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive. The MPO uses this process to develop a vision for the region and then decides how to allocate federal and some state transportation funds to programs and projects—roadway, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian—which support the vision shared by all 32 cities and towns in Berkshire County.

The work of the MPO is conducted by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission staff under the direction of the MPO. The primary focus is to develop certification documents which include the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The success of the MPO is dependent upon a strong public involvement program collaborating with a wide range of interested parties on an ongoing basis. The public participation plan outlines the procedures utilized by the MPO in the transportation planning process.

The MPO has also established the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) which serves as a standing advisory committee that provides for the involvement of local government officials, transportation professionals and other representatives of transportation providers, user groups, and other relevant interests. It is the intent of the MPO to have a TAC that provides a broad-based transportation planning perspective and is fully representative of the Berkshire regional community.

The manner in which the MPO operates is outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the members and the state which was last updated in 2011. Delegates to the MPO are organized as follows:

- ◆ Secretary and CEO, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)
- ◆ Administrator, MassDOT Highway Division
- ◆ Chair of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC)
- ◆ Chair of the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority
- ◆ Mayor of the City of Pittsfield
- ◆ Mayor of the City of North Adams
- ◆ One Selectperson from a town within each of the following four subregions:

North Sub-region (Adams, Clarksburg, Florida, New Ashford, Savoy, Williamstown)

North-Central Sub-region (Cheshire, Dalton, Hancock, Hinsdale, Lanesborough, Peru, Windsor)

Southeast Sub-region (Becket, Lee, Lenox, Monterey, New Marlborough, Otis, Sandisfield, Tyringham, Washington,)

Southwest Sub-region (Alford, Egremont, Great Barrington, Mount Washington, Richmond, Sheffield, Stockbridge, West Stockbridge)

Berkshire MPO Sub-Regions

