



## A Newsletter for Community Planning in the Berkshire Region

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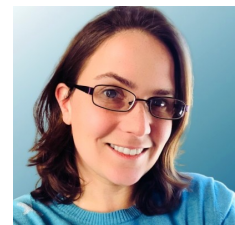
### Staff Announcements

Welcome, BRPC Environmental and Energy Program Staff!

[Sherdyl Fernandez-Aubert](#) has transitioned from part-time intern to full-time Environmental and Energy Planner. He assists communities and conservation organizations with sustainability and resiliency efforts focusing on clean energy planning, including reducing energy use, identifying renewable energy opportunities, addressing natural hazards and climate change impacts, and protecting the natural environment. Sherdyl (pronounced "sure-deal") started with BRPC in May as a paid intern developing and implementing Williamstown's MassSave Community First Partnership. He is a resident of Hancock and holds a bachelor's in Conservation Biology and an associate's in Outdoor Education and Leadership.



BRPC is also pleased to welcome [Britney Danials](#) as an Environmental and Energy intern. Britney is a recent cum laude graduate of Smith College with a Bachelor's in Environmental Science and Policy. Her background includes science communication, project-based fieldwork, and multisector collaborations for environmental policy. As a long-time Berkshire resident, she is excited to bring her local knowledge to support BRPC projects, including community engagement for municipal vulnerability preparedness, natural hazard mitigation, Green Communities, stormwater, and the Williamstown MassSave project.



Pittsfield Mayor Linda Tyer nominated [Andy Ottoson](#), Senior Public Health Planner, to the [Massachusetts Opioid Recovery and Remediation Fund Advisory Council](#). Sixty percent of opioid settlement funds (\$344,000,000 for Massachusetts through 2038) are for statewide remediation efforts.

### Grants & Opportunities

Equitable Recovery for a Stronger Community

## BFF WEBSITE LAUNCH

The graphic shows a laptop displaying the BFF website interface. The website has a green header with the text 'Equitable Recovery for a Stronger Community' and 'BFF WEBSITE LAUNCH'. Below the header, there are four columns of content: 'Cities and Towns', 'Non-Profits', 'Education', and 'Small Business'. Each column has a small image and text. At the bottom left of the graphic is the 'BERKSHIRE Funding Focus' logo, and at the bottom right is the website URL 'www.berkshirefundingfocus.org'.

We're thrilled to announce the launch of the Berkshire Funding Focus (BFF) website, an initiative (housed at BRPC) to support Berkshire County stakeholders seeking state and federal funds to aid with pandemic-related recovery and rebuilding efforts.

Learn more about the Berkshire Funding Focus initiative here:

[www.berkshirefundingfocus.org](http://www.berkshirefundingfocus.org).

Have questions? Contact [Karen Pelto](#) at [kpelto@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:kpelto@berkshireplanning.org). We look forward to helping you find opportunities and resources that are right for your community.

## Meet the Donors

**Thursday, November 10, 3:00 - 4:30 pm**

Barrington Stage Company, The Blatt Center, 36 Linden St., Pittsfield

The Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires is hosting a panel of Berkshire funders designed to give nonprofits a better understanding of funder guidelines and expectations, as well as an opportunity to meet the people behind the funding opportunities, ask questions, and learn from your fellow nonprofits. Moderated by NPC founder Liana Toscanini. Register [HERE](#).

### Participating Funders:

Greylock Federal Credit Union \* Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation \* Lee Bank  
Adams Community Bank \* Williamstown Community Chest \* Berkshire Bank Foundation  
Mill Town Capital

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**Registration is open for Regional Transit Plan (RTP) Public Information Sessions** about the upcoming Berkshire RTP2024. Share your thoughts and experiences about transportation needs. Meetings are in person and live Zoom webinars. Registration is required to join the Zoom webinars. Spanish translation service available upon request.

Avísanos si necesita traducción de español para participar. 413-442-1521, extension 10 o [nrusso@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:nrusso@berkshireplanning.org).

- **Thursday, November 10, 5:30 pm**, North Adams City Council chambers, 10 Main St, [REGISTER HERE](#)
- **Wednesday, November 16, 5:30 pm**, Great Barrington Firehouse, 37 State Rd, [REGISTER HERE](#)



These [free](#) webinars and in-person workshops are aimed at strengthening Berkshire County nonprofits. Offered by the Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires, in partnership with BRPC. Registration is limited to 20. Details and registration [HERE](#).

### Evening

November 9 (6-7:30 pm) Berkshire Funding Landscape (webinar)  
November 10 (3-4:30 pm) Meet The Donors (workshop, *not limited to 20*)  
November 14 (6-8 pm) Introduction to Grants and Grant Writing (webinar)  
November 21 (6-8 pm) How to Keep your Board Engaged in Resource Development All Year (webinar)  
December 1 (5:30-7:30 pm) Telling your Nonprofit Story (workshop)  
December 6 (6-7:30 pm) Creating Awareness of Your Organization Through PR & Outreach (webinar)

### Daytime

November 9 (9:30-11:30 am) Program Evaluation for Lean Nonprofits (webinar)  
November 16 (10-11:30 am) Strategies for Building Relationships with Your Board of Directors (webinar)  
November 17 (10 am -1 pm) Understanding & Competing For Federal Grants (workshop)  
November 29 (10 am -12 pm) Telling Your Nonprofit Story (workshop)  
December 1 (10 am -12 pm) Creating Videos for Nonprofits (workshop)  
December 2 (9:30-11:00 am) Building a Stronger Board #3 (webinar)  
December 8 (9:30-11:30 am) Building Awareness for Your Organization through PR & Outreach (webinar)  
December 13 (10:30 am -12:30 pm) Donor Cultivation (workshop)

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**Stream Smart Training for Culvert Replacements** see details below in Environmental & Energy Program section. **Thursday, Dec. 1, 7:45 am - 12:15 pm**  
Berkshire Community College Koussevitsky Arts Center Auditorium, food and refreshments provided. **Registration required: [Stream Smart Training Tickets](#)**

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## Head Start Launches REACH Program / Programa Nuevo Para Niños Preescolar

Berkshire County Head Start has launched the REACH (Resources to Empower & Advocate for Children and Households) program to assist and empower Pittsfield preschool children, families and caregivers who have historically been unable to access services due to long-standing and entrenched economic disparities, racial inequity and generational poverty.

REACH is for Pittsfield families who need full-day childcare but may not meet state and federal eligibility requirements or have needed documentation. Services include free transportation and a family advocate. Details at [berkhs.org/reach](http://berkhs.org/reach), Carrie Dupuis at 413-499-0137 ext. 242 or [cdupuis@berkhs.org](mailto:cdupuis@berkhs.org).

Berkshire County Head Start (BCHS) lanza REACH, un programa comunitario ha creado para asistir y empoderar a los niños en edad preescolar, las familias y los cuidadores de Pittsfield que históricamente no han tenido acceso a los servicios que necesitan debido a la arraigada desigualdad económica y racial, además de la pobreza generacional.

Las familias de Pittsfield que necesitan guarderías que funcionen el día entero, pero no cumplen los requisitos estatales o federales o no tienen la documentación necesaria, pueden beneficiarse de este programa. Ofrecen transporte gratis y una defensora de familias. Detalles en [berkhs.org/reach](http://berkhs.org/reach), Carrie Dupuis, 413-499-0137 extensión 242 o [cdupuis@berkhs.org](mailto:cdupuis@berkhs.org).



### CHAPA's MEI Lite Program

Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) is a statewide organization advocating for the production and preservation of affordable housing and diverse sustainable communities. CHAPA is seeking additional communities for its [MEI Lite Program](#), which seeks to build support for affordable housing production. Municipal governments and community organizations throughout the Commonwealth are encouraged to submit [an application](#).

While all communities can benefit from public education and community discussions about the need for housing development and how it benefits communities, each community is unique in its character, land, zoning, and housing stock. CHAPA works to implement a community engagement strategy in every individual community that is responsive to its unique environment. CHAPA's community engagement strategy is based on the collaborative model CHAPA uses at the state level; focused on building coalitions that work together to address each community's housing challenges. Coalition-building will bring together community stakeholders representing local businesses, civic groups, houses of worship, and other active groups and individuals. To learn more about the Initiative please go to [CHAPA's Municipal Engagement Initiative webpage](#).

### Health Equity Funds Available

The New England Rural Health Association (NERHA) has funds to address issues in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic such as: paying for transportation to doctor's visits, affording healthy food, finding/paying for childcare, and more. If your organization serves the following towns: Becket, Dalton, Hancock, Hinsdale, Lanesborough, Peru, Richmond, Windsor, Washington, please contact [Jaymie Zapata](#), Public Health Planner, about your needs.

## Community

### Youth, Local Governance, and Land Use Planning

The Community Planning program is engaging young people and informing them about local governance and land use planning, working with local schools to educate students about potential career opportunities in local government and land use planning. Engaging and informing young people about local issues will help to retain more of them in the Berkshires.

Solicitations have gone out to local schools for opportunities to speak with students at career fairs and during courses in local history/government/entrepreneurship. School guidance counselors, teachers, and administrators throughout the county have expressed an interest in the program and Community Planner Seth Jenkins has participated in a variety of events, including a career

fair at Hoosac Valley High School and a local history class at Monument Mountain High School. Events are planned at Wahconah, Mount Greylock, and Lenox High Schools.

If you know a teacher or school that would be interested, contact [Seth Jenkins](#). Presentations can be customized to address a specific topic or involve local government officials.

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### What is BRPC up to?

BRPC has started tracking projects on a magnetic map in our office. Come take a look and see what we are doing in your community and the entire region. With over 115 active projects, we are working all over the county!



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### More Hybrid Meetings and 1 Fenn St. Building Access

BRPC is hosting more hybrid meetings with Owl cameras in the conference rooms that show all participants. We hope to see more of you in person. To enter the BRPC offices, please get "buzzed in" through the outside call box by pressing # 04. Announce yourself to the Receptionist and get a 2nd floor elevator code or be met at the top of the stairs. While you are here, check out the new office area. The street door is locked per preference of other organizations in the building.

## Data & Information Services

### 2022 Housing and Transportation Affordability Index

The Center for Neighborhood Technology has released the [2022 Housing and Transportation Affordability Index](#) (H&T Index). The index uses the 2019 American Community Survey data and the 2019 Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics data. The release is the first since 2016. The index reports that Berkshire County households spend 50% of their income on housing and transportation. This percentage is the fourth highest in Massachusetts, behind Franklin, Hampshire, and Dukes Counties, and tied with Barnstable County. The index reports that housing in the county (27% of income) is more affordable than in other counties except for Essex and Suffolk. Still, transportation (23% of income) is more expensive than in all counties except Franklin and Hampshire. It is important to note that this data is from before the pandemic, which has seen dramatic rises in housing costs, a change in commuting patterns, and inflation that has increased the costs of everything.

## Economic Development

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 223-2027 - Public Comment Period



BRPC staff and members of the Berkshire CEDS Committee are developing the next Berkshire County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), to be effective from 2023 through 2027. A DRAFT is available for public comment through **November 12, 2022**:

### [DRAFT 2023-2027 CEDS](#)

The draft document includes links to online forms to submit your suggestions for Action Plan and Resiliency Recommendation items. General comments and suggested edits may also be emailed to [Laura Brennan](#), with the subject line “CEDS Draft.”

## Environmental & Energy

### Stream Smart Training Opportunity for Culvert Replacements

The Housatonic Valley Association and the Berkshire Clean, Cold and Connected Partnership are hosting a free Stream Smart Workshop. Learn more about navigating culvert replacements that are more flood resilient, ecologically friendly, and in compliance with the Mass Road Stream Crossing Standards.

#### Topics include:

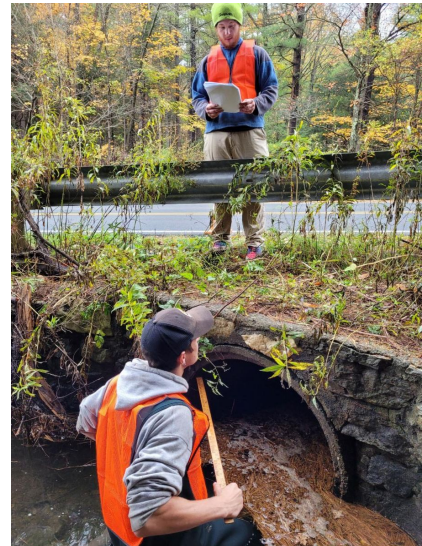
- MassDOT Chapter 85 legal requirements
- How to analyze NOIs for Conservation Commissions
- Field reconnaissance & location prioritization
- Funding opportunities
- Geomorphology Demo with a Stream Table!

#### Details:

**Thursday, Dec. 1**, 7:45 am - 12:15 pm  
Berkshire Community College Koussevitsky Arts Center  
Auditorium, 1350 West Street, Pittsfield, MA

Food and refreshments provided

Registration required. Space is limited, so sign up soon: [Stream Smart Training Tickets](#)



## Public Health

### Age and Dementia Friendly Design Considerations for Physical Infrastructure

The spaces surrounding us can either support or limit our ability to engage and thrive within our communities. Age, chronic diseases, and lifestyle choices are associated with the increasing risk of dementia. Berkshire County is aging rapidly. Although dementia is not a normal part of aging, about 130,000 people in Massachusetts are diagnosed with dementia, and this number is growing.

For over eighteen months, Senior Public Health Planner Sandra Martin has represented BRPC on the MA Advisory Council on Alzheimer’s Disease and All Other Dementias. We are circulating the [Age and Dementia Friendly Design Considerations for Physical Infrastructure](#) report.

This report is a guide to rethinking how we plan, design, build, renovate, and maintain the Commonwealth’s built environment with a special focus on residents’ needs as they age. Small changes can make big differences for all ages, especially the elderly. Choices in signage, colors, flooring, and strategically placed benches are examples that can contribute to dementia friendly spaces and don’t necessarily cost more.

The report scratches the surface as to how we can improve physical environments for older adults, including individuals living with dementia. Our work has shown that there is still much to be done. Communities across the Commonwealth are starting to adopt these considerations. We know this document will inspire other communities to follow in their footsteps. Sandra is glad to answer questions and get suggestions on ways to spread the word on this important public health topic. [Sandra Martin](#).

## Regional

Drought Conditions Improved

September precipitation events directly benefited Massachusetts' hydrological systems, improving conditions in all regions of the state. The Western Region has been upgraded to Level 0-Normal Conditions. Additional precipitation is needed to continue recovering from the drought and fully recharge the ecosystem. Coastal regions northeast of Boston, and the elbow of Cape Cod from Hyannis to Wellfleet are still exceptionally dry.

## Transportation



### Seeking Input on the Regional Transportation Plan - [Encuesta de Necesidades de Transporte](#)

BRPC is seeking public input about the strengths and issues of our present-day transportation network in Berkshire County. We are collecting feedback via an online survey (available through December 31) and public information sessions. Your input will be gathered and included in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and help make recommendations for future Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) projects, BRPC staff activities, and studies. Among other things, we want to know:

- How do you travel around the region? (foot, bicycle, car, bus, taxi, etc.)
- What other options do you wish you had?
- How do you see yourself interacting with the transportation system in the future?
- What are your transportation challenges?
- What weather hazards limit your travel?
- How can transportation improvements help economic development?
- How satisfied are you with the various parts of our transportation system?

The RTP has four major parts:

1. Assess **current conditions, needs, and future uses** (i.e., roads, bridges, transit services, and other infrastructure)
2. Gather **public input** to understand residents' needs and desires better
3. Develop **recommendations** for projects and programs out to 20 years in the future, considering socio-economic projections and needs identified through the previous steps
4. Fit recommendations within the forecasted transportation **budget**

There are two steps you can take to provide your input:

1. **First**, please take the Community Transportation Survey [HERE](#).
2. **Second**, please use the RTP Mapper to add suggestions or highlight locations where you experience issues (road quality, backed-up traffic, etc.). [HERE](#).

Contact [Nick Russo](#) with questions or suggestions.

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



Berkshire Regional Planning Commission | 1 Fenn St., Suite 201, Pittsfield, MA 01201

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