



November 27, 2023

District Local Technical Assistance 2024

Notice of Available Technical Assistance

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) is soliciting eligible projects from its member communities to receive technical assistance under the 2024 District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) program. Under this program, BRPC staff provides technical assistance to communities on eligible projects at no cost to the community.

Description of the DLTA Program

The DLTA fund is an annual grant established via Massachusetts General Law. For fiscal year 2024, this fund received an annual appropriation to be distributed statewide to regional planning agencies to support local and regional planning and service provision projects. Please note that any awards made under this solicitation are contingent on the continuing availability of funds provided to BRPC from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Priority Funding Areas for Technical Assistance

A proposed project must fall into one of the two general priority categories listed below to be considered eligible for technical assistance:

- 1) "Planning Ahead for Housing" (or to help reach the Statewide Housing Production Goal) or "Planning Ahead for Growth"; and
- 2) "Community Compact Cabinet Activities"

All proposed projects should align with Community Compact Cabinet Best Practices. Please see Attachment # 1 for examples of eligible projects for each priority funding area and Attachment # 2 for Community Compact Cabinet activities that communities are encouraged to pursue. Community Compact best practices can include those that are part of the Community Compact Cabinet program as a first priority and best practices explicitly aligned with Community Compact Cabinet best practices but are not best practices identified in a signed Community Compact Cabinet agreement.

Application Deadline

Applications for technical assistance must be received via email to the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission by 5:00 PM on **Friday, January 26, 2024.** **Submissions before this deadline are very welcome and encouraged.**

Instructions

Please complete and return the attached "Request for Technical Assistance" form before the application deadline. **The Select Board Chairperson or Mayor must sign all applications.**

Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss potential projects with BRPC staff **before** submitting an application. Potential applicants are welcome to also reach out to discuss community needs and projects that may be larger in scope than a typical DLTA project. Staff can assist in evaluating whether DLTA or other funding sources may be the most appropriate fit for a project. If a project requires funding outside of or in addition to DLTA, staff can potentially assist in preparing grant applications to other funding sources at no charge to the community.

No Local Match Requirement

There is no local match requirement to receive technical assistance under the 2024 DLTA program. However, municipalities are encouraged to provide a voluntary cash or in-kind match.

Evaluation of Applications

Preference will be given to applications that meet the following criteria:

Primary Criteria

- *Supports municipalities seeking assistance to achieve designation under the Housing Choice Initiative*
- *Supports municipalities seeking to adopt best practices under the Community Compact Cabinet program*
- *Supports best practices and activities identified in the Community Compact Cabinet program*
- *Achieves the objectives of the two priority funding areas, especially COVID-19 recovery activities that fall within the priority categories*
- *Regional Cooperation and/or resource sharing (e.g., involves multiple (2+) municipalities and supports collaboration)*
- *Responds to a regional development need*
- *Enhances the region's economic competitiveness, including local permit streamlining, assessing economic development opportunities in a community or region, downtown economic revitalization, mixed-use development, establishment, expansion, or utilization of a Ch. 43D priority development site*
- *Addresses the housing needs of a community and/or the region, especially related to 40R districts*
- *Implements components of local plans or previous studies related to housing or development*

- *Is likely to catalyze changes "on the ground" (redevelopment, approved zoning changes, new by-laws, regulation, service delivery cost savings, inter-municipal collaboration on service delivery or renewable energy use/production, etc.)*
- *Serves as a model for other municipalities*

Secondary Criteria

- *The extent to which the project can be completed by BRPC staff*
- *Efforts will be made to distribute projects to different municipalities throughout the region*
- *Multiple projects in a single municipality will only be awarded if funding allows, not including participants in a regional application*
- *Receipt of and performance on past DLTA projects*
- *Availability of other funding sources*
- *Provision of voluntary cash, especially municipal funds, or in-kind match*

Decisions & Notice of Awards

- All decisions are at the discretion of BRPC staff based upon its interpretation of the evaluation criteria and funding availability.
- BRPC reserves the right to request additional information before a decision is made.
- If a proposed project exceeds BRPC's ability to undertake a project through the DLTA program, BRPC and the applicant may engage in a strategic discussion about reducing the scope of the project or obtaining additional funding (e.g. local contribution, other grants) to complete the portion of the project that exceeds the DLTA-funded elements of the project.
- BRPC anticipates selecting projects for technical assistance on **February 2, 2024**. Applicants will be notified in writing of the decisions. Successful applicants should be prepared for a working meeting/phone conversation with BRPC staff starting the week of **February 5, 2024**, to discuss the project.

NOTE: Funds cannot be used for routine administrative tasks of municipalities, including, but not limited to, grant application preparation, and cannot substitute DLTA funds for which other state resources are available.

BRPC Contacts:

If you have any questions or wish to discuss a project idea, please contact:

Cornelius Hoss, Community Planning Program Manager (413) 442-1521 ext. 44,
choss@berkshireplanning.org



BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

Request for Technical Assistance District Local Technical Assistance Program 2024

PART 1. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Lead Municipality: _____ **Date:** _____

Point of Contact, Lead Municipality, as designated by the governing body (please print):

Name: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ **E-mail:** _____

Partner Municipalities: (List all partner municipalities, contacts and contact information (email and phone) from those municipalities:

Does your Municipality have a current signed Community Compact Cabinet Agreement?

Yes

No

If yes, for what Best Practice _____

Has your Municipality received or is it seeking Housing Choice Initiative designation?

Yes

No

PART 2. TYPE OF ASSISTANCE

Please check the type of assistance requested:

Housing Choice Initiative

Implements a Communities' Signed Community Compact Cabinet Best Practice

Community Compact Cabinet Activities

Planning Ahead for Housing

Planning Ahead for Growth

PART 3. ASSISTANCE PROPOSAL

Please attach a brief (one-page) summary of the project that addresses the following topics **or use the form at the end of this document:**

1. **Purpose:** Provide a concise statement of the purpose and type of assistance requested.

2. **Priority Funding Areas:** Provide a concise description of how your assistance request addresses one of the priority funding areas. If your request is to adopt or implement a signed Community Compact best practice, please identify that best practice. If you request Housing Choice Initiative designation, please describe how your community intends to obtain that designation.
3. **Project Background:** Briefly describe how the proposed project fits with other municipal objectives, such as implementing activities outlined in a master plan or other planning document. If applicable, please describe any related projects recently completed or currently underway that directly relate to the proposed project. Please also note any planned action or investment that would or could potentially result from the successful completion of the proposed action.
4. **Project Scope & Timeline:** Please list and provide a short description of the major tasks and anticipated timeline to achieve the proposed project, including the anticipated starting date.
5. **Desired Results:** Please describe the desired results (deliverables or products) as an outcome of this project.
6. **Local Official/Staff Commitment:** Please describe the municipal officials/committee members/staff members who will be involved with this project, clearly identifying their roles.
7. **Local Match:** Please identify any voluntary in-kind or cash match (no match required).

PART 4. APPLICATION SUBMITTAL PROCESS

Applications are due by 5:00 pm **Friday, January 26, 2024.**

A fillable application is in the News and Announcements section of the BRPC website, [BRPC - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission \(berkshireplanning.org\)](http://BRPC - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (berkshireplanning.org))

IMPORTANT:

Application packets must be sent via email only to:
 Cornelius Hoss, Community Planning Program Manager
choss@berkshireplanning.org
 Tel (413) 442-1521 x44

Please feel free to reach out to Cornelius Hoss with any questions or to discuss potential projects prior to submission. Please note that any awards made under this solicitation are contingent on the continuing availability of funds provided to BRPC from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

PART 5. AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

Please include the signature of the Chief Elected Official authorizing you to submit this request.

Name _____ **Date** _____

Title _____

Signature _____
 (MAYOR/SELECT BOARD CHAIR)

PART 3. ASSISTANCE PROPOSAL

Please attach a brief (one-page) summary of the project that addresses the following topics or complete the form this form:

8. **Purpose:** Provide a concise statement of the purpose and type of assistance requested.

9. **Priority Funding Areas:** Provide a concise description of how your assistance request addresses one of the priority funding areas. If your request is to adopt or implement a signed Community Compact best practice, please identify that best practice. If you request Housing Choice Initiative designation, please describe how your community intends to obtain that designation.

10. **Project Background:** Briefly describe how the proposed project fits with other municipal objectives, such as implementing activities outlined in a master plan or other planning document. If applicable, please describe any related projects recently completed or currently underway that directly relate to the proposed project. Please also note any planned action or investment that would or could potentially result from the successful completion of the proposed action.

11. **Project Scope & Timeline:** Please list and provide a short description of the major tasks and anticipated timeline to achieve the proposed project, including the anticipated starting date.

12. **Desired Results:** Please describe the desired results (deliverables or products) as an outcome of this project.

13. **Local Official/Staff Commitment:** Please describe the municipal officials/committee members/staff members who will be involved with this project, clearly identifying their roles.

14. **Local Match:** Please identify any voluntary in-kind or cash match (no match required)

Attachment # 1

Examples of Eligible Projects for Each Priority Funding Area

- a. **Planning Ahead for Housing:** Planning and implementation activities that encourage and support affordable and market-rate housing production opportunities.:
 - The development of market, mixed-income and affordable multi-family housing in transit-oriented-development locations, employment centers, downtown locations, and state endorsed Priority Development Areas (PDAs) within the RPA's jurisdiction, including any "Gateway municipality" (see MGL, c. 23A, s. 3A);
 - The creation of as-of-right zoning districts, such as those eligible under DHCD's Compact Neighborhoods policy or the Chapter 40R/Smart Growth statute, including starter homes;
 - Consideration of Transfer Development Rights zoning districts, including areas that may qualify as sending and receiving areas.
 - Development of Workforce housing under the Housing Development Incentive Program (HDIP) and Urban Center Housing TIF areas.
 - The creation of prompt and predictable permitting through an Expedited Permitting Priority Development Site using Chapter 43D for Residential;
 - Identifying challenges and solutions with respect to infrastructure requirements that affect the ability to construct multi-family residential projects in as-of-right zoning districts and parcels;
 - Identifying multi-family residential projects subject to the Permit Extension Act (as amended), assessing impediments to such projects, and recommending steps that the Commonwealth and/or the applicable municipality could realistically take to enable those projects to go forward;
 - Regional analysis of affordable and market-rate housing needs to include, for example, preparation of a *Housing Production Plan* pursuant to 760 CMR 56.00 et. seq., and similar undertakings that may guide the execution of a compact among communities for locating affordable and market-rate housing;
 - Assisting one or several municipalities who must comply with requirements under the new Fair Housing regulation issued by HUD;
 - Assisting one or more communities to analyze their qualifications to be designated as a Housing Choice Community (including improvements to existing reporting related to Building Permits to the US Census) and/or apply for Housing Choice Initiative capital grants.

- a. **Planning Ahead for Growth:** Planning and implementation activities that encourage and support economic development opportunities that may include, but are not limited to:
 - Identification, assessment and mapping of Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and Priority Preservation Areas (PPAs) at the local and regional levels, including discussion of specific areas for multi-family housing growth.
 - Supporting prompt and predictable permitting through the Chapter 43D Expedited Permitting Program for Economic Development projects;
 - Identifying challenges and solutions with respect to infrastructure requirements that affect the ability to advance economic development activities;
 - At a city or town's request, identifying economic development projects subject to the Permit Extension Act (as amended), assessing impediments, and recommending steps that the state

- and/or the applicable municipality could realistically take to enable those projects to go forward; and
- Developing or updating components of municipal master plans and providing technical assistance that supports the implementation of strategies that are designed to advance well-planned growth and development policies and practices.

- b. Supporting the Community Compact, including regionalization:** Supporting municipalities seeking to adopt state best practices under the Community Compact Cabinet program, including those who want to pursue projects of a regional nature. Assisting Compact Communities with implementation of their Community Compact best practice selection(s).
- c. Supporting the Housing Choice Initiative:** Supporting the Housing Choice Initiative (HCI) and communities seeking assistance to achieve Designation under the HCI. The HCI will designate communities that have produced certain housing levels and have best practices that allow for compact housing development. Priority shall be to support Designated Housing Choice Communities. The activities under “Planning Ahead for Housing” qualify as best practices under the HCI.

Menu



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[\(/\) > Governor Maura Healey and Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll \(/orgs/governor-maura-healey-and-lt-governor-kim-driscoll\)](#) > [Community Compact Cabinet \(/orgs/comm](#)

Community Compact Best Practice Areas

Descriptions of the best practice areas for the Community Compact Best Practice Program.

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Age and Dementia Friendly Best Practices

An Age-Friendly community is one that is livable for residents of all ages inclusive of older adults and those living with dementia. Age-friendly communities strive to be equitable and accessible with walkable streets, housing and transportation options, access to services, and opportunities for residents to participate in community activities.

Best Practice: Convene and engage municipal and community leaders, businesses, and the public to align age- and dementia-friendly goals, conduct a baseline needs assessment, and create an action plan for age- and/or dementia-friendly action to pursue the path of an age- and dementia-friendly designation.

Best Practice: Develop and amend municipal policies, regulations, and programs with a goal of promoting aging in all policies, programs, and services in an equitable and inclusive manner.

Best Practice: Implement age- and dementia-friendly initiatives to support aging in community, including, but not limited to, programs that address social determinants of health, facilitate connection and engagement, promote intergenerational engagement, improve mobility, facilitate technological access, develop digital literacy, support older workers, job seekers and volunteers, publicize and share local information and resources to support aging and care givers, and raise public awareness that aging is an asset and that older adults, including people living with dementia, make meaningful contributions to the community.

Best Practice: Develop and Update ADA Transition Plans for municipalities

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Best Practices

Best Practice: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Training Program – Develop a comprehensive ongoing training program for staff, elected and appointed officials. The pathway to advancing equity begins with training. Training is helpful in building a shared vocabulary and understanding of equity concepts and how they impact the community.

Best Practice: Community Needs Assessment – Conduct a community needs assessment to ascertain community buy-in and goals related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Best Practice: Workforce Assessment – Conduct Assessment of Town's workforce and compare to population and census data. Identify gaps. Provide areas that require improvement and make recommendations on how to implement positive change.

Best Practice: Equity Audit – Conduct a town/city wide equity audit to determine what the existing barriers are to equitable representation and participation, access and opportunity for all residents and business

owners in the community.

Best Practice: Recruitment and Retention of a Representative Workforce – Develop a data driven and informed plan to guide human resources professionals with the goal of recruitment and retention of a representative workforce. This will include model policies and procedures to be adopted, as well as technology to support the continued practices, including the development of a town/ city public Diversity Dashboard.

Best Practice: Public Engagement – Develop an initiative to improve and increase community engagement, particularly with underrepresented members of the community and young people and improve access to local government. This can include actions to enhance internal and external communications to encourage the use of pronouns in email signatures and on business cards as a way to build inclusive community and the review of websites and printed materials to ensure the use of gender-neutral language and pictures of diverse and underrepresented members.

Best Practice: DEI Strategic Planning – Develop a plan that includes community's goals and strategies for improving the delivery of services through a DEI lens. (Could include a single focus, like housing, or be more general).

Best Practice: Zoning Review – Comprehensive review of Zoning Bylaws through an informed racial equity and civil rights lens and recommend any changes for adoption by Town Meeting/City Council.

Best Practice: Municipal Supplier Diversity Program – Develop a Municipal Supplier Diversity Program with purchasing policies and procedures to promote and ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion in contracting for businesses owned by minorities, women, Portuguese, veterans, service-disabled veterans, those with a disability, and LGBT individuals, as well as small Massachusetts businesses. This may include spending goals and benchmarks for various businesses.

Economic Development Best Practices

Best Practice: Create an Economic Development Plan that engages diverse stakeholders, leverages local and regional economic strengths and assets, encourages innovation and entrepreneurship, and/or promotes workforce development planning and implementation.

Best Practice: Align land use regulations, especially zoning, capital investments, and other municipal actions with Housing Development, Economic Development, Master, Land Use Priority, or other plans for future growth. Promote development and reuse of previously developed sites.

Best Practice: Create and distribute a Business Guide to not only promote development goals and priorities, but also clearly outline the community's policies and procedures related to zoning and permitting.

Best Practice: Pursue and attain key community designations and/or certifications (such as Vacant Storefront District, PACE Massachusetts, etc.) that can assist local businesses and developers to leverage/access additional state resources in support of their efforts to establish and/or expand in the community.

Best Practice: Identify and establish Priority Development Sites through community planning and site assembly efforts that engage diverse stakeholders and include necessary zoning changes and/or local permitting process enhancements that proactively address obstacles to housing/job creation.

Best Practice: Establish an Expedited Permitting Processes, including Chapter 43D expedited permitting designation, that allows developers and those wishing to expand operations to achieve clear timelines for permitting review, and to encourage growth in priority development districts.

Best Practice: Create a Digital Equity Plan. Engage in planning activities and develop strategic documents related to digital equity and bridging the digital divide for all residents.

Best Practice: Create a District Management Entity, such as a Business Improvement District, that engages public/private stakeholders to develop and support downtown revitalization efforts.

Best Practice: Adopt As-Of-Right Zoning to promote housing development, support transit oriented development, and mixed-use development in priority districts.

Best Practice: Establish and Utilize Performance Data to evaluate the competitiveness of the community, conduct year to year comparisons, and measure economic development performance against comparable communities. Create a public dashboard to monitor and communicate the data with the public.

Education Best Practices

Best Practice: Cultivate partnerships between the municipality, public school leadership and private child care providers to understand the interest and plan for universal pre-kindergarten for all 4-year-olds within the community, with shared curriculum and professional development.

Best Practice: Implement the MyCAP framework for college and career advising for all students beginning in middle school and continuing through high school, in collaboration with regional workforce organizations (e.g., MassHire Career Centers).

Best Practice: Implement collaborative arrangements among regional vocational technical schools, comprehensive high schools, and community colleges to maximize opportunities for high school students and adults to access specialized vocational education programs.

Best Practice: Create opportunities for municipal governments to collaborate with high schools and colleges to provide students with internship experiences aligned to their courses of study, especially in STEM-related departments (i.e., IT, engineering department, accounting, etc.).

Best Practice: Leverage Connecting Activities programs for local high school students pursuing summer jobs and paid internships.

Energy and Environment Best Practices

Greenhouse gas reduction and renewable energy

- **Best Practice:** Participate in programs offered by DOER's Green Communities Division to reduce energy use, cut GHG emissions attributed to buildings and vehicles, increase renewable energy, and adopt building codes that support energy efficiency and electrification in new construction and major renovations. This includes developing and implementing municipal energy reduction and decarbonization plans in coordination with the Department of Energy Resources' Green Communities Division and regional planning agencies.

Climate change adaptation and resilience

- **Best Practice:** Apply for the MVP 2.0 program to update your local resilience priorities with a more representative community core team, and then move planning priorities to action through an MVP Action Grant.
- **Best Practice:** Plan and design capital projects (such as buildings, facilities, or parks) using the Resilient MA Action Team (RMAT) Climate Resilience Design Tool. This tool helps you integrate statewide climate change data and resilience standards into the project design to decrease risks and enhance resilience to a changing climate. Log into the tool at https://resilientma.mass.gov/rmat_home/designstandards/ (https://resilientma.mass.gov/rmat_home/designstandards/)

Sustainable development and land protection

- **Best Practice:** Encourage sustainable development through a master plan, open space and recreation plan, zoning, street and trail design, and other initiatives to create higher density, mixed-use development and transit-oriented communities; increase pedestrian and bike mobility; protect land and water resources; increase climate resilience; and advance housing and economic development goals.

Water resource management

- **Best Practice:** Develop a water conservation plan that includes proper maintenance and updates of infrastructure, reduction in water losses, reduction in infiltration and inflow, installation of water efficient fixtures and appliances, and instating of watering restrictions to ensure long-term water resource sustainability, enable growth and avoid new source development.
- **Best Practice:** Enhance local water resources by reducing impervious cover and managing point and nonpoint source stormwater runoff. In coordination with the Department of Environmental Protection's stormwater management coordinator, these efforts can include development of plans and implementation of actions that can increase recharge, reduce pollution, and control flooding to protect lives, infrastructure, and critical assets, and minimize impacts during droughts.

Waste management

- **Best Practice:** Participate in MassDEP Recycling Dividends Program to increase the Recycling & Diversion Rate through regulatory improvements, service expansion, and other means in order to reduce waste and disposal costs. Partner with Recycle Smart MA and utilize the Recycling IQ Kit to support residents in throwing away less, recycling more and following smart waste practices.

Site cleanup

- **Best Practice:** Complete a Brownfields Inventory so that the community is aware of all abandoned and underutilized properties in order to move forward with plans to assess/remediate and redevelop these properties. Engage with Regional Planning Agency and/or MassDEP Statewide Brownfields Coordinator on developing plans to assess/remediate or redevelop Brownfields and identifying funding opportunities and technical assistance.

Agriculture

- **Best Practice:** Develop programs, policies, and plans to support local agriculture, support land access and protection, and support community access to healthy and local food. This can be accomplished via efforts like creation of marketing initiatives, creation of farm inventories that quantify fiscal benefits to communities, contribution to land protection, adoption of local "Right to Farm" ordinances, establishment of local bodies like an Agricultural Commission or Food Policy Council, and establishment of partnerships to connect farms and fisheries with processors and distributors, schools, pantries, and places of work.

Financial Management Best Practices

Best Practice: Establish a Budget document that details all revenues and expenditures, provides a narrative describing priorities and challenges, and offers clear and transparent communication of financial policies to residents and businesses.

Best Practice: Develop, document and implement Financial Policies and Practices including reserve levels, capital financing, and use of Free Cash. Such policies should identify the responsible parties and procedural steps necessary to carrying out the directed strategy or action.

Best Practice: Develop and utilize a Long-range Planning/Forecasting Model that assesses both short-term and long-term financial implications of current and proposed policies, programs and assumptions over a multi-year period.

Best Practice: Prepare a Capital Improvement Plan that reflects a community's needs, is reviewed and updated annually, and fits within a financing plan that reflects the community's ability to pay.

Best Practice: Review and evaluate Financial Management Structure to ensure that the structure and reporting relationships of the community's finance offices support accountability and a cohesive financial team process.

Best Practice: Utilize Financial Trend Monitoring, modeled after the ICMA's Financial Trend Monitoring System (FTMS).

Best Practice: Perform an assessment of the municipality's enterprise funds, including revenues, expenditures, indirect costs, and related policies and procedures to determine whether enterprise fund(s) are self-sufficient and make recommendations for best financial policies and practices.

Housing and Livable Communities Best Practices

Best Practice: Create an Affordable Housing Trust Fund and/or adopt the Community Preservation Act to fund production and preservation of affordable housing in your community.

Best Practice: Take steps to demonstrate housing production and/or zoning best practices in an effort to obtain Housing Choice Community Designation. Designation provides access to an exclusive grant program and priority status for state grants.

Best Practice: Create and implement a Housing Production Plan (HPP) that accounts for changing demographics, including young families, changing workforce, and an aging population. Conduct ongoing and robust outreach and education about housing needs in your community to dispel common myths about the effects of new housing. Create an inventory of municipally owned and publicly controlled land that can potentially developed for housing production.

Best Practice: Adopt Chapter 40R Smart Growth as of right zoning for "missing middle housing" to facilitate the creation of dense residential or mixed-use smart growth zoning districts, including a set percentage of affordable housing units, to be located near transit stations, if applicable, or in areas of concentrated development such as existing city and town centers, and in other locations near activity centers.

Best Practice: Amend zoning to reduce required off street parking spaces for residential development. Review MAPC "Perfect fit Parking" study of parking utilization compared to requirements demonstrating requirements for multi-family parking are almost universally too high.

Best Practice: Adopt or amend zoning to streamline the process for homeowners to build Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) which are also known as "in law apartments". Consider removing requirements for familial relationship. Distribute materials from AARP promoting advantages of ADUs.

Best Practice: Perform a comprehensive review of Zoning Bylaws through an informed racial equity and civil rights lens and recommend any changes for adoption by Town Meeting/City Council. Provide information to officials and the public about exclusionary practices in zoning. Consider reducing minimum lot sizes.

Best Practice: Pursue land use and housing training opportunities such as the Citizen Planner Training Collaborative (CPTC), Massachusetts Housing Partnership's Housing Institute, or trainings by state and regional entities. Become versed in available state, regional and federal funding opportunities, tax credits, and incentive programs.

Best Practice: Complete and submit to HUD an “Assessment of Fair Housing Report,” incorporating HUD data and assessment tools, local data and knowledge, a significant community participation process, and the assessment tool. Access technical assistance from non-profit groups with expertise.

Best Practice: Develop a re-use plan or feasibility analysis for revitalization of existing municipal or publicly owned land or buildings

Human Resources Best Practices

Best Practice: Cost-Out Collective Bargaining proposals so that the impact of the total package is known. This provides the municipality with a clear understanding of both short-term and long-term budgetary impacts.

Best Practice: Develop a Workplace Safety program so that the risk of on-the-job injuries is minimized.

Best Practice: Develop a formal Wage and Classification Plan that details, at a minimum, job descriptions, employee grades, and salary ranges, thereby providing the municipality with a tool to make pay decisions that are reasonable in comparison to similar work being carried out in all areas of city/town government.

Best Practice: Develop Employee Policies and Procedures for things such as discrimination, sexual harassment, information technology use, drug and alcohol, use of social media, and town-owned vehicles.

Best Practice: Manage employee benefit costs such as health insurance, dental insurance, unemployment insurance, and worker’s compensation/111F; includes eligibility review and evaluation of insurance choices.

Best Practice: Prepare a Succession Plan to help address the pending wave of retirements that will challenge a municipality’s ability to maintain service levels and utilize expertise and experience of mature workers through consulting or mentorship programs.

Best Practice: Explore Centralized Human Resources/Personnel Operations to improve service delivery and build efficiencies.

Information Technology Best Practices

Best Practice: Perform a cybersecurity assessment to identify human and technology risks within the environment, analyze and identify gaps in existing cybersecurity processes, assess vulnerability to external attack, and identify steps to remediate identified issues. The assessment includes a general IT assessment of hardware infrastructure, networking, backup, email and user account management, with a written evaluation and recommendations.

Best Practice: Design a cybersecurity incident response plan tailored to your community to handle rising cybersecurity threats and conduct a tabletop exercise to test your response plan.

Best Practice: Design a regional shared IT services program to maximize technology resources across multiple communities and/or school districts.

Best Practice: Develop a strategy to prioritize technology investments and develop IT resiliency, disaster recovery and contingency plans that protect those investments and position the community to effectively manage unforeseen events.

Best Practice: Ensure that municipal websites, digital reports and documents, desktop and web-based software, and other IT systems are usable by residents with disabilities, as required by federal law.

Mental Health Best Practices

Best Practice: Expand community awareness and access to Community Behavioral Health Centers/Community Crisis Intervention and Behavioral Health Urgent Care by coordinating with law enforcement and other first responders to increase drop off rates at CBHCs and decreasing rates of arrest and/or drop off at Emergency Departments.

Best Practice: Disaggregate Behavioral Health Helpline data by caller zip code, race, gender, ethnicity and age to better understand BHHL utilization rates and develop community specific culturally sensitive strategies to increase rates of access.

Best Practice: Strengthen partnerships between public safety, social services, healthcare providers, and local public and private schools to establish systems and protocols for assessing and identifying children and young adults who present risks to themselves or to others, in order to ensure effective and pro-active responses that can prevent violence and provide timely supports to individuals in need.

Public Accessibility Best Practices

Best Practice: Undertake a Title II Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Self-Evaluation and Transition plan to comply with the ADA's TII Administrative Requirements through a comprehensive review of all public buildings, including programs, activities, and services.

Public Health Best Practices

Best Practice: Conduct a maternal and child health landscape assessment to identify and understand the community strengths and gaps in improving the health and well-being of birthing people, infants, children and youth with special health needs, and their families, including public health infrastructure and staff capacity. Develop shared public health services with contiguous municipalities.

Best Practice: Collaborate with Emergency Management to ensure preparedness and planning efforts address gaps and ensure resiliency for essential public health and community functions. Using tools, such as CDC's Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) and DPH's Emergency Preparedness Portal, incorporate planning considerations for at-risk populations, including birthing people, infants, children, and youth, including

those with special health needs and people with disabilities have access and functional needs in times of disasters and emergencies.

Best Practice: Climate Change Adaptability Planning. Data collection, strategy development and planning at the local level are critical to the overall preparedness and long-term resilience to the effects of climate change. Develop a report that identifies: the range of climate impacts, associated potential health outcomes, vulnerable populations, the additional burden of health outcomes due to climate change, and the most suitable health interventions. Use the CDC's BRACE framework to develop and implement a plan that introduces health system program changes.

Best Practice: Adopt strategic practices to advance health equity in local health both internally within their departments and externally with communities and other government agencies.

Public Safety Best Practices

Best Practice: Police and fire departments, in collaboration with EMS, should establish NFPA3000-compliant Active Shooter Hostile Event Response protocols and hold regularly scheduled, integrated training sessions. The Department of Fire Services (DFS), the Massachusetts State Police (MSP) and the Municipal Police Training Committee (MPTC) are delivering Active Attack Integrated Response (AAIR) training. This integrated response training is consistent with NFPA3000 and is based on four main concepts: Integrated Response, Unified Command, Whole Community and Planned Recovery. To further assist communities, the MPTC and the DFS retain specialty-specific ASHER directors who are available for guidance and coordination.

Best Practice: Develop an Emergency Preparedness Plan in partnership with the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) to enhance the community's disaster and emergency response capabilities.

Best Practice: Establish Hazardous Material Response Protocols in conjunction with Regional Hazardous Materials Response Teams under the Department of Fire Services to enable cities and towns to protect their citizens, the environment, and property during incidents involving a release or potential release of hazardous materials.

Best Practice: Implement a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan that outlines natural hazards that affect your municipality, identify actions to reduce any impacts from those hazards, and create a pipeline of shovel ready projects for state and federal funding. Use the data and information from the State Hazard Mitigation & Climate Adaptation Plan (SHMCAP) to help guide local officials and community leaders during Local Hazard Mitigation Plan development and other strategic planning efforts that address risks and vulnerabilities to natural hazards, especially those exacerbated by climate change.

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/local-hazard-mitigation-planning> (/info-details/local-hazard-mitigation-planning).

Best Practice: Collaborate with the Municipal Police Training Committee (MPTC) to implement the 2020 police reform legislation fully, including: use of force training focusing on de-escalation, school resource officer training, Bridge Academy compliance for any part-time officers and 40 hours of annual in-service training.

Best Practice: Ensure compliance with policies that govern the use of the statewide Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kit (SAECK) tracking system with special attention on meeting statutory deadlines for hospitals and collection sites.

Best Practice: Develop whole community plan to divert, prevent, and suppress behaviors that lead to gun violence, especially among young people.

Best Practice: Collaborate with the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) and develop policies that integrate with the Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP) and the Massachusetts Interoperable Emergency Communications Best Practices guideline regarding your public safety agency's communications and interoperable resource utilization and planning.

Best Practice: Pursue opportunities for returning citizens to reintegrate into their community after incarceration through personal connection, meaningful work, sustainable housing, and effective treatment according to their unique personal needs.

Regionalization/Shared Services Best Practices

Best Practice: Regionalize services and share resources among municipalities for efficient and effective service delivery to residents and taxpayers in this era of shrinking budgets, loss of seasoned employees to retirement, and increased need for service improvements.

Best Practice: School/Municipal Shared Services Feasibility Study: Conduct a feasibility study on options for shared services among school districts and municipalities for efficient and effective service delivery to residents and taxpayers in this era of shrinking budgets, loss of seasoned employees to retirement, and increased need for service improvements.

Best Practice: Review Existing Regional or Shared Services Arrangements: Existing regional or shared services arrangements can be difficult to sustain over time. Conduct an organizational and operational review of existing an existing arrangement to improve its long-term viability. This study should include substantial engagement of all partners and development of future-focused strategies.

Transportation & Public Works Best Practices

Safe & Active Transportation

Best Practice: Adopt a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) plan or policy that establishes zoning regulation around transit centers that maximizes bicyclist, pedestrian, and transit use, allows for lower levels of required parking, and encourages mixed use development to ensure basic amenities are placed near population centers.

Best Practice: Participate in MassDOT's Complete Streets Funding Program to implement Complete Streets principles into all regular planning and design practices on local roadways. Demonstrate advancement

through the program by adopting a Complete Streets Policy, developing a Prioritization Plan, and implementing Complete Streets projects with funding from both within and outside the MassDOT program.

Best Practice: Adopt a plan or policy that addresses the transportation needs of aging populations. Develop a specific process for the consideration of interventions that prioritize the needs of the elderly in transportation related decisions or activities. Examples include education and outreach, inclusion of age-friendly infrastructure in transportation projects, and offering alternatives to single occupancy vehicles to reach senior destinations.

Best Practice: Enroll local schools and/or school district(s) in MassDOT's Safe Routes to School Program to promote safe and active travel options for children on their commute to and from school or other youth destinations. Adopt the program's "Six E's" approach and actively participate in the educational component of the program.

Best Practice: Prepare and implement a speed management plan or policy that encourages safer vehicle speeds on neighborhood roadways frequented by pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. Utilize MassDOT's Speed Management Toolkit in the development of the plan or policy.

Resilient & Reliable Transportation

Best Practice: Develop a multi-year asset management plan that inventories and rates the condition of public works assets such as roadway pavement, municipal vehicles, drainage facilities, and culverts/bridges. The plan should then include a funding strategy and schedule for efficient maintenance, preservation, and reconstruction/replacement of these assets.

Best Practice: Adopt a policy or plan that regularly schedules roadway maintenance. Demonstrate routine improvements for local roads, such as street sweeping, pothole filling, cutting back vegetation that interferes with sight distance or sidewalk width, clearing brush that obscures traffic signage, renewing or installing pavement markings, or conducting nighttime surveys to check visibility and retro reflectivity.

Best Practice: Develop a transportation climate resiliency plan that identifies assets at risk of being negatively impacted by climate change. The plan should include reactive interventions for existing issues and proactive planning for future conditions, as well as identify potential funding opportunities.

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Best Practice: () Implement community programs and investments that reduce transportation emissions from network users living, working, or traveling on local roadways.

Best Practice: Develop a plan to facilitate increased use of electric vehicles and related infrastructure. Plans could include upgrades to the electric grid, analyses of charging station needs, installation of charging infrastructure, and replacement of gas or diesel municipal vehicles with electric vehicles when feasible.

Adopting local policy related to electric vehicles such as charger requirements for new developments should also be considered.

Veterans Services Best Practices

Best Practice: Establish a clear VSO Succession Plan that includes all relevant training, manuals, and a concrete timeline for replacing an old VSO to ensure there are no gaps in coverage.

Best Practice: Create and disseminate a veteran survey to capture more comprehensive socioeconomic/demographic data on all veterans in the community. This should also include a needs assessment portion to establish which programs and resources are needed.

Best Practice: Develop a plan for transportation services for disadvantaged veterans to obtain services and care needed outside of the community in which they reside. This could include subsidized, free, volunteer, or ride sharing options

Best Practice: Develop a robust stakeholder engagement plan to determine the types of info local veterans want, as well as the frequency and methods of communication they prefer.

Best Practice: Explore the creation of a local veteran's resource center. This area can serve as a one-stop-shop to share information and resources, as well as provide a consolidated meeting space for multiple veteran entities.

Workforce Development Best Practices

Best Practice: Conduct a comprehensive economic and workforce development assessment of the municipality or region that identifies labor market trends, labor supply and demand data, industry, and employment projections to inform policy and planning, such as economic development goals, zoning/permitting policies, transit development, and workforce planning.

Best Practice: Design and implement workforce training strategies for 1-2 identified high quality and high demand occupations that also have critical labor shortages in collaboration.

Best Practice: Design and implement workforce training strategies for 1-2 high demand occupations identified by municipalities and apply for Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund in partnership with trainers, MassHire and other key partners to fund training across municipalities for specific occupations in demand eg CDL drivers, assessors etc. Take advantage leveraging strategies and investments other programming like registered apprenticeship.

Best Practice: Establish an industry-focused advisory committee comprised of local business, workforce and economic development agencies, and education and training institutions to develop and deploy short- and long-term workforce planning strategies, such as school-to-career pipeline development, occupational skills training programs, and career pathway development.

Best Practice: Create a local MassHire talent recruitment campaign in collaboration with regional employers ready to hire, developing and deploying a comprehensive effort using tactics such as job postings, direct outreach to job seekers, hiring events, job fairs, on site recruitment, direct candidate referrals, and social media marketing.

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