



## A Newsletter for Community Planning in the Berkshire Region

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### Upcoming BRPC Meetings

- [Regional Issues Committee](#) - April 9 at 3:30 pm
- [Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization](#) - April 22 at 4 pm
- [Regional Issues Committee](#) - April 23 at 3:30 pm
- [Executive Committee](#) - May 1 at 4 pm
- [Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee](#) - May 7 at 1 pm
- [Commission Meeting](#) - May 15 at 7 pm

### BRPC Employment Opportunities & Staff Announcements

- [Digital Navigator Internship](#)
- [Youth Advisory Board Consultant](#)
- [Public Health Training Specialist](#)
- [Outdoor Recreation Internship](#)
- [Southern Berkshire Community Outreach Specialists](#)

[Angeli Franz](#) joined BRPC as a Public Health Intern this month. Angeli is a UMass Amherst student pursuing a B.S. in Public Health and Health Sciences. She will be assisting with two primary projects: Compiling and analyzing data from the Gray to Green walking audits and creating public-facing messaging for microplastics reduction. She will be with BRPC through the end of the summer.



Angeli is passionate about global health, health equity, and environmental sustainability. Outside of her studies, she enjoys playing soccer, reading sci-fi dystopian novels, and thrifting/selling sustainable clothes.

Thank you and all our best to **Marie Brady**, Senior Public Health Planner who focused on youth, as she leaves to work in her home state of New York as Communications Coordinator with Health Research, Inc. through the NYS Dept of Health. She will work part time until July 1. In her own words:

*"I am most proud of getting our two amazing Youth Advisory Boards (Pittsfield and Taconic High Schools) up and running. To ensure diverse viewpoints, we asked school staff to identify students who may not see their full potential or who may not have had many opportunities to use their voices to create positive changes. I am so proud of every single one of them for their openness in talking about mental health and substance use. The students said they met people they never would have crossed paths with. These peers have become friends and are comfortable sharing personal stories with each other. I am so incredibly proud of these amazing students and will miss them all endlessly!"*

### Announcements & Events

PLEASE JOIN US!

## Payment-In-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILOT) Inequities in the Woodlands Partnership Region and Beyond

April 7, 2025 - 1 p.m.  
Windsor Town Hall  
1927 Route 9 (next to the church)



The Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts invites you to a special event with State Auditor Diana DiZoglio, State Senator Paul Mark, and local officials as we detail the newly-released report [Pursuing Equitable State-Owned Land Reimbursements for Municipalities](#)

**Woodlands**  
PARTNERSHIP

Direct questions to: Phil DeCologero  
Director of Community & External Affairs  
Office of State Auditor Diana DiZoglio  
[Philip.DeCologero@massauditor.gov](mailto:Philip.DeCologero@massauditor.gov) / 857-330-7263

### [Equity and Justice for All Tour](#)

April 15, 6 - 7:30 pm, Hybrid, location in Pittsfield to be announced

Undersecretary of Environmental Justice and Equity, María Belén Power, will meet with constituents to listen to concerns, gain a deeper understanding of the economic and environmental challenges impacting local neighborhoods, and work together to find solutions. Your voice matters in shaping a more sustainable and equitable future for our communities.

[Register here.](#)

Berkshire County Municipal Staff and Volunteer Networking Event  
April 30th at Mazzeo's Ristorante

The Berkshire Selectmen's Association, Berkshire Municipal Managers, and Berkshire Regional Planning Commission invite you to an evening of networking with colleagues from neighboring communities on Wednesday, April 30th, from 5 to 7 pm at Mazzeo's Ristorante, 1015 South Street, Pittsfield. Hearty appetizers will be served and a cash bar will be available.

[Tickets are \\$25/person and are available online.](#)

This networking event is for any municipal officials (elected or appointed) who are interested in attending. This is an opportunity for us to gather and celebrate the work that we do for the Berkshires. We hope to see you there, and if you're not able to make it please note that two more networking events will be offered in 2025.

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### Massachusetts Housing Partnership - 18th Housing Institute

MHP's 18th Housing Institute will be held on **June 4 & 5** at the DCU Convention Center in Worcester. This intensive two-day training engages participants in discussion and problem-solving activities related to the development of affordable homes across Massachusetts. More information on the [Housing Toolbox website](#), registration will open in April.

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**BERKSHIRE**  
STATE OF WORK SUMMIT

**FROM HIRING TO THRIVING:  
A New Era of Workplace Culture**

June 18, 2025 • Berkshire Community College

**BUY TICKETS**

### Grant Opportunities

Community One Stop for Growth Portal Open

The fiscal year 2026 application portal for the Community One Stop for Growth is open. One Stop programs offer funding and support to housing and economic development projects related to activation and placemaking, planning and zoning, site preparation, construction, and infrastructure.



Applicants may begin working on their applications now in the [application portal](#); EOED will accept full application submissions from May 5th through June 4th, with awards announced in the fall. For more information, please visit [www.mass.gov/onestop](http://www.mass.gov/onestop).

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### [Diesel Emissions Reduction Act \(DERA\) Electric Solicitation Grant](#)

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) is accepting applications for approximately \$3.66 million in funding to reduce diesel emissions from vehicles and equipment across the state. MassDEP seeks to prioritize these resources to benefit environmental justice (EJ) communities and to address environmental inequities.

**Applications are due April 7.**

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### Community Compact Grant Programs

The [Municipal Fiber Grant Program](#) is a competitive, matching grant program to assist municipalities with the construction of municipal fiber broadband infrastructure and related projects and expenditures. If you have questions, contact [Sean Cronin](#), Senior Deputy Commissioner of Local Services. **The application period ends April 10.**

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Mass Cultural Council launched [Creative Experiences](#) to support arts, humanities, and sciences activities with grants of \$2,500 to \$5,000 to fund cultural programs during FY26. Creative Experiences merges the former **Festivals & Projects** and **Creative Projects for Schools** grant programs. Current grantees are encouraged to apply for repeat events or new ones. The application deadline is **April 30** at 11:59 pm. For more information: [Creative Experiences guidelines](#), [Frequently Asked Questions](#), 617-858-2821 or [creativeexperiences@mass.gov](mailto:creativeexperiences@mass.gov).

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### Electric Vehicles Charging Infrastructure: Purchasing Strategies and Statewide Contracts

Massachusetts Office of the Inspector General & Operational Services Division

Learn about new legislation that provides municipalities with a path to procure EVs and install charging infrastructure in a single, combined procurement under Chapter 30B.

### [Webinars - Register Here](#)

May 15, 10:00 - 11:30

June 17, 10:00 - 11:30

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The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's [Sustainable Materials Recovery Program](#) supports municipal recycling, composting/organics, re-use, source reduction, program development, and education and enforcement activities.

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The [Dam and Seawall Removal or Repair Program](#) provides financial assistance to plan and implement repairs to key infrastructure that provides storm damage protection and flood and erosion control OR to remove unneeded infrastructure to increase climate resilience or establish natural protection solutions.

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[Conservation Partnership grants](#) further protection of conservation and recreation land so that outdoor recreational opportunities are available to every Massachusetts resident.

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[Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities \(PARC\) Grants](#) provide funds to cities and towns to acquire parkland, build a new park, or renovate an existing park for outdoor recreation purposes.

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## Community Planning

### Remote and Hybrid Public Meeting Provisions Extended to June 30, 2027

Governor Healey signed *An Act Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency* on March 28, 2025. This legislation will permit state and local public bodies to conduct public meetings in a hybrid or remote format and allow participants at town meetings to participate remotely. This authorizes the continuation of remote meetings and public access under the Open Meeting Law and other remote meeting provisions until June 30, 2027.

### ADA Planning and Implementation

The Massachusetts Office on Disability is opening the [Municipal ADA Improvement Grant program](#). MOD awards communities up to \$250,000 to either conduct a Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan or undertake renovations identified in completed plans. An overview of the grant process and Q&A session will be held on Monday, May 19, 2025. [Register here.](#)



In the current fiscal year, BRPC successfully worked with five communities - Williamstown, North Adams, Adams, Pittsfield, and Great Barrington - to obtain MOD funding to develop Self-Evaluation and Transition Plans. BRPC will complete those plans in June and those communities will be eligible for project funds.

BRPC is currently overseeing the contracting and construction for accessibility improvements in Lanesborough. The work includes renovating the Town Clerk and Tax Collector's service counters, improving the bathroom, and installing push buttons on external doors.

BRPC is available to assist communities with grant writing, planning, and implementation services. Interested communities should email Community Planner [Andrew McKeever](#) or call 413-442-1521 ext. 27.

## Economic Development



### Berkshire State of Work Summit *From Hiring to Thriving: A New Era of Workplace Culture*

Mark your calendar for an important event for all employers, including municipal governments in Berkshire County. June 18th will be a day packed with practical ways to tackle your recruitment & retention, workplace culture, and employee "soft skills" goals.

Read more and register here: [www.berkshirecc.edu/news-events/2025/work-summit.php](http://www.berkshirecc.edu/news-events/2025/work-summit.php)

### Mass Broadband Institute (MBI) Re-opening Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program

The Digital Equity Planning Program enables municipalities to engage in planning activities to bridge the digital divide, providing a framework to increase access to and usage of the internet. You can [view completed plans](#) on the MBI website.

BRPC is a pre-qualified consultant with strong experience in this work. We would be happy to work with the remaining eligible communities: Alford, Egremont, Hancock, Hinsdale, Mt.

Washington, New Ashford, Peru, Richmond, Sandisfield, Savoy, Tyringham, and Williamstown.

Applications are first come, first served through April 25. Funding is limited and will likely be depleted before the final due date. Contact Senior Planner [Wylie Goodman](#) for assistance.

### Municipal Bond Tax-Exempt Status Advocacy

A delegation from the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) visited Washington in March to advocate on an issue of importance to all cities and towns nationwide: the continuation of the tax-exempt status for municipal bonds, the primary mechanism used by state and local governments when raising capital to finance a wide range of important public projects. The interest earned by investors is exempt from federal income taxes, making them an appealing investment and constraining the interest rates paid by borrowers – in this case, municipalities.

[Read more from MMA on this issue.](#)

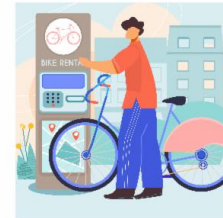
Download a [sample City Council or Selectboard Resolution template](#) from the National League of Cities

## Public Health



The SPARK Youth Advisory Board (YAB) conducted a lunchtime mixer on Friday, April 4th at Wander in Pittsfield, bringing together students from Pittsfield High School and Taconic High School, with tacos from Tito's, to talk about the issues and opportunities they see in our community. Outpost Studios was also there to get footage for a series of short films about the YAB's efforts.

## Transportation



Celebrate Berkshire Bike Month with us this May! Every year, we encourage Berkshire County residents to get out on two wheels, whether it be for fun, fitness, work, or errands. You would be surprised at what you can accomplish by bike. To help get you in the spirit, save the date for some flagship events this May. Details about each event are below. **Bookmark the [Berkshire Bike Month Link Tree](#) to get the latest information as events are updated!**

- Friday, May 2: First Fridays Big Air Bike Jam - Pittsfield
- Friday, May 9: Pittsfield Social Ride - start and end at Hot Plate Brewing
- Friday, May 16: National Bike to Work Day
- Sunday, May 25: Family fun ride on the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail
- Saturday, May 31: Pittsfield Farmer's Market Bike Day

**First Fridays at 5:** Details are still forming; expect a night of trick bike show-offs and shenanigans - fun for all ages whether you want to ride or watch!

**Pittsfield Social Ride:** From the concrete downtown to our most wide open spaces, we'll take a leisurely 7-mile loop starting and ending at Hot Plate Brewing, 1 School Street. Stick around for a drink and visit the Berkshire Flavourful Bites food truck! DJ Pup Daddy will be spinning a bring-your-own vinyl night as well. All ages and abilities welcome - we'll stick to side roads and flat terrain as much as possible, with one moderate climb on a quiet back street.

**National Bike to Work Day:** Celebrate this holiday wherever you live! Have a long commute to work? Take your bike in your car and ride the "last mile" from a nearby parking place. The important thing is getting on your bike! Submit your ride for an entry into a \$500 drawing! See the [Bike Month Link Tree](#) for more information.

**Family fun ride on the Ashuwillticook:** Take in the budding springtime scenery on the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail! Join us for a casual, all-ages ride starting at the Berkshire Mall. We'll ride to the Farnham's Crossing trailhead and back. Kids get a free frozen treat!

**Pittsfield Farmer's Market Bike Day:** Ride your bike to the market! Lock up at the free bike valet while you shop. Bring the kids to the Bike Rodeo event between 10 and noon to build their skills! Recommended for grades 2-5.

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



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