



**BERKSHIRE COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
(CEDDS)
2017**

Prepared By: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

December 2017

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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December 13, 2017

Ms. Debra Beavin
Economic Development Specialist, Massachusetts Representative
U.S. Department of Commerce - Economic Development Administration
Philadelphia Regional Office
Robert N.C. Nix, Sr. Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse, Room 602
900 Market Street, Room 602
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Re: 2017 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs)

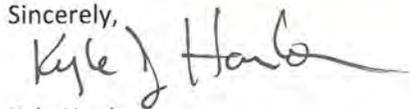
Dear Ms. Beavin,

Enclosed is Berkshire Regional Planning Commission's (BRPC) 2017 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs). BRPC is submitting this revised CEDs document to the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for EDA's review and approval.

This document, including the supplemental material, was approved and adopted by the Commission on September 28th, 2017, and by the CEDs Committee on December 12th, 2017. The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission along with our Strategy Committee appreciate your ongoing collaboration with us, and look forward to continuing our work with you.

If you have any questions, or require any additional information, please contact Laura Brennan at 413-442-1521, ext. 14, or lbrennan@berkshireplanning.org; or Nathaniel Karns at 413-442-1521, ext. 26 or nkarns@berkshireplanning.org.

Sincerely,



Kyle Hanlon
Chair, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

Acknowledgements

The 2017 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy was developed in consultation with the Berkshire Region's thirty-two partnering communities – represented by their delegates and alternates; and with the efforts of the members of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee.

The Committee roster is shown below along with brief bios indicating the members' area of expertise and their representation rolls on the committee. Following that is a listing of our communities and their delegates and alternates that serve on the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission along with their area of representation.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee

Roger Bolton

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
1 Fenn Street, Suite 201
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Mr. Bolton is a retired professor of Economics at Williams College, as a community leader and public official he serves on the CEDS Committee and the BRPC Executive Committee, and has a special interest in regional economics.

Heather Boulger

Berkshire County Regional Employment Board
66 Allen Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Ms. Boulger is the Executive Director of the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board and serves as the Workforce Development Board representative on the CEDS Committee.

David Curtis

1Berkshire
66 Allen Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Mr. Curtis is an Economic Development Specialist who leads the Economic Development team at 1Berkshire, the Region's Economic Development organization.

Jill Sasso Curtis

Berkshire Community College/Public
1350 West Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Ms. Curtis is the Dean of Community Engagement, Education, and Workforce Development at Berkshire Community College and serves as the CEDS Committee's Higher Education representative with keen interest in workforce development.

Bonnie Galant

City of Pittsfield
City Hall - 70 Allen Street
Pittsfield MA 01201

Ms. Galant was the Community Development and Housing Program Manager for the City of Pittsfield and was the Public Official representing Central Berkshire County until her retirement on July 30, 2017.

Tim Geller

Community Development Corporation of South Berkshire
17 Bridge Street
Great Barrington MA 01230

Mr. Geller is the Executive Director of the Community Development Corporation of South Berkshire and has extensive expertise in financing and small business support. He is the private sector representative for non-profit community development.

Keith Girouard
Berkshire Regional Office
Massachusetts Small Business Development Center
33 Dunham Mall, Suite 103
Pittsfield MA 01201

Mr. Girouard is the Regional Director with the Berkshire Regional Office of the MA Small Business Development Center. He is the private sector representative for small business assistance.

Michael Hoffman
TD Bank
99 West Street
Pittsfield MA 01201

Mr. Hoffman is the private sector representative for financial services.

Michael Nuwallie
City of North Adams
City Hall - 10 Main Street
North Adams MA 01247

Mr. Nuwallie is the Community Development Director for the City of North Adams and serves on the Berkshire Brownfields Committee. He is the Public Official representing Northern Berkshire County.

Cynthia Pansing
Berkshire Agricultural Ventures
314 Main Street, Office #23
Great Barrington, MA 01230

Ms. Pansing is the Executive Director of Berkshire Agricultural Ventures, a nonprofit that focuses on growing the regional food economy through loans, grants and technical assistance to farms and food businesses. BAV aims to strengthen the viability of food-based businesses and help fill food system infrastructure gaps. She is the representative of the food and agricultural sector.

Ian Rasch
Alander Construction
40 Railroad Street
Great Barrington, MA, 01230

Mr. Rasch is one of the principals with Alander Construction and has more than 17 years of experience in real estate development and construction management. He is the private sector representative for this industry.

Chris Rembold
Town of Great Barrington
Town Hall - 334 Main Street
Great Barrington MA 01201

Mr. Rembold is the Town Planner in Great Barrington and is the Public Official representing Southern Berkshire County.

Hope Sullivan
IS183
P. O. Box 1400
Stockbridge MA 01262

Ms. Sullivan was the Executive Director of the IS183 Art School of the Berkshires, representing the non-profit cultural sector until a job relocation in Summer 2017.

Alternate Member
Nathan Haddad
1Berkshire
66 Allen Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Mr. Haddad is the Special Projects Associate on the 1Berkshire Economic development team.

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Partnering Communities

Adams, Alford, Becket, Cheshire, Clarksburg, Dalton, Egremont, Florida, Great Barrington, Hancock, Hinsdale, Lanesborough, Lee, Lenox, Monterey, Mount Washington, North Adams, New Ashford, New Marlborough, Otis, Peru, Pittsfield, Richmond, Sandisfield, Savoy, Sheffield, Stockbridge, Tyringham, Washington, West Stockbridge, Williamstown, and Windsor

Key: Private Sector (PS), Public Officials (PO), Community Leaders (CL), Private Individuals (PI), Representatives of Workforce Development Boards (WD), Institutions of Higher Education (HE), and Minority and Labor Groups (M/L)

**Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Delegates and Alternates**

Community	Name	Representing
Adams	Sandra Moderski, Delegate	Planning Board (PO)
	John Duval, Alternate	Select Board (PO), General Dynamic Defense Systems (PS)
Alford	Alex Glover, Delegate	Planning Board (PO), private attorney (PI)
Becket	Robert Ronzio, Delegate	Planning Board (PO)
	Alvin Blake, Alternate	(PI)
Cheshire	Peter Traub, Delegate	Planning Board (PO)
Clarksburg	Audrey Matys, Delegate	(PI)
	Carl Mckinney, Alternate	Town Administrator (PO)
Dalton	Caleb Darby, Delegate	Planning Board (PO)
	Robert Bishop, Alternate	Select Board & Conservation Commission (PO)
Egremont	Gregory Cherin, Delegate	Planning Board (PO)
	Charles Ogden, Alternate	Retired teacher (PI)
Florida	Gabriel Oleson, Delegate	Planning Board (PO)
	Christine Dobbert, Alternate	Town Administrator (PO)
Great Barrington	Malcolm Fick, Delegate	Planning Board (PO)
	Chris Rembold, Alternate	Town Planner, CEDS Strategy Committee, Berkshire Brownfields Committee (PO)
Hancock	Blake Johnson, Delegate	Planning Board (PO)
Hinsdale	Dan Brown, Delegate	Planning Board (PO)
Lanesborough	Ron Tinkham, Delegate	Planning Board (PO), Retired General Electric employee (PI)
	Jack Hickey, Alternate	Berkshire Brownfields Committee (PO), Retired insurance executive (PI)

Lee	Buck Donovan, Delegate	Planning Board (PO), Building contractor (PS)
	Thomas Wickham, Alternate	Select Board (PO), Building Contractor (PS)
Lenox	Pam Kueber, Delegate	Planning Board (PO), Home renovation business (PS)
	Kenneth Fowler, Alternate	Select Board (PO)
Monterey	Pat Salomon, Delegate	Planning Board (PO)
	Kenn Basler, Alternate	Select Board (PO)
Mount Washington	Robert Bott, Delegate	Planning Board (PO), Retired Finance Manager (PI)
	James Lovejoy, Alternate	Select Board, Finance Committee (PO) Cabinet maker small business (PS)
New Ashford	Mark Phelps, Delegate	Planning Board, Select Board (PO), Golf Course Groundskeeping Manager (PS)
	Kevin Flicker, Alternate	(PI)
New Marlborough	James Mullen, Delegate	Planning Board (PO), Landscaping business owner (PS)
	Patricia Hardyman, Alternate	Planning Board (PO)
North Adams	Kyle Hanlon, Delegate	Planning Board, City Redevelopment Authority (PO) Sales representative wholesale plumbing/heating/a/c (PS)
	Michael Nuvalie, Alternate	Community Development Director, Berkshire Brownfields Committee, CEDS Strategy Committee. (PO)
Otis	Harold Kobrin, Delegate	Planning Board (PO), Home builder (PS)
	Michael Ernst, Alternate	(PI)
Peru	Sam Haupt, Delegate	Planning Board, Berkshire MPO Alternate (PO) Guardian Insurance (PS)
Pittsfield	Sheila Irvin, Delegate	Community Development Board (PO), Retired Teacher active in Mass. Teachers Association (M/L)
	CJ Hoss, Alternate	City Planner (PO)
Richmond	Adeline Ellis, Delegate	Planning Board (PO)
	John Hanson, Alternate	Planning Board (PO)
Sandisfield	Gary Bottum Sr., Delegate	Planning Board (PO)
	Roger Kohler, Alternate	(PI)
Savoy	John Tynan, Delegate	Planning Board, Select Board (PO)
	Daniel Labonte, Alternate	(PI)

Sheffield	Kenneth Smith, Delegate	Planning Board (PO)
	Rene Wood, Alternate	Retired (PI)
Stockbridge	Marie Raftery, Delegate	Planning Board (PO)
	Carole Owens, Alternate	(PI)
Tyringham	Christina Alsop, Delegate	Planning Board (PO)
	Sarah Hudson, Alternate	(PI)
Washington	Marilyn Wiley, Delegate	Planning Board (PO), retired School Food Services Director (PI)
	Michael Case, Alternate	Select Board (PO)
West Stockbridge	Dana Bixby, Delegate	Planning Board (PO), Architect (PS)
	Karen Zick, Alternate	(PI)
Williamstown	Amy Jeschawitz, Delegate	Planning Board (PO)
	Roger Bolton, Alternate	CEDS Strategy Committee, retired Professor of Economics (PO, HE)
Windsor	John Garcia, Delegate	Planning Board (PO)
	Timothy Crane, Alternate	Select Board (PO)

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Staff

Nathaniel Karns, *Executive Director*
 Thomas Matuszko, *Assistant Director*
 Mark Maloy, *GIS/Data Coordinator*
 Bill Compton, *Senior Planner*

Other Participating Organizations

This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Berkshire County could not have been accomplished without the willing and active participation of communities, individuals, and organizations, as well as the representatives at the United States Economic Development Administration, throughout the process.

Funding was provided for this planning effort by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development through the District Local Technical Assistance Program, the United State Department of Commerce through the Economic Development Administration and the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission.

Berkshire Regional Economic Development Partners

1Berkshire

Adams Community Bank

Berkshire Bank

Berkshire Community College

Berkshire Compact for Education – Massachusetts

College of Liberal Arts

Berkshire County Regional Employment Board

Berkshire Enterprises

Berkshire Innovation Center

Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

Berkshire Regional Transportation Authority

BerkshireWorks Career Center

Charles H. McCann Technical School

Charter One Bank

Community Development Corporation of South

Berkshire

Franklin County Community Development

Corporation

Greylock Federal Credit Union

Hoosac Bank

Landmark Credit Union

Lanesborough Economic Development Committee

Lee Bank

Lee Community Development Corporation

Legacy Banks

Lenox National Bank

Massachusetts Broadband Initiative

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources

Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and
Economic Development

Massachusetts Small Business Development Center

MassDevelopment

Pittsfield Economic Development Authority

Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation

Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce

TD Bank

The Pittsfield Cooperative Bank

Trustco Bank

Williams College

Williamstown Chamber of Commerce

Williamstown Savings Bank

Wired West

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) is the designated regional planning agency for the Berkshire region, which includes 30 towns and 2 cities comprising Berkshire County in western Massachusetts. In this capacity, the BRPC conducted a proactive regional planning process designed to create jobs, support and stabilize local and regional economies, and improve the quality of life for all residents throughout the region.

The Berkshire County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) process is a coordinated regional planning process that documents economic development activities, ideas, and information throughout Berkshire County and presents a plan for the future economic development of the region. The CEDS process is administered by BRPC. For the CEDS process, BRPC was guided by an advisory committee, the CEDS Strategy Committee, representing regional businesses, community representatives, and regional economic related organizations.

The CEDS is both a process and a document. The benefits are:

- It enables municipalities and organizations to access U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant funds. An approved CEDS is a prerequisite to receive funding from EDA.
- It is an opportunity for municipalities and economic development related organizations throughout the region to share information about their economic development projects and initiatives and have them compiled into a region-wide effort. It provides an opportunity for a higher level of support for individual projects and initiatives than if those projects were presented individually.
- It is a mechanism for the economic development related interests in the region to convene and to develop coordinated and complementary approaches to economic development challenges, resulting in a stronger regional economy.

The CEDS process, document, and committee are all closely related to, but not duplicative of, other economic development processes, documents, and groups in the region. To ensure that those related efforts are woven into all the aspects of the CEDS, economic interests throughout the region are participants on the CEDS Strategy Committee, or have been contacted throughout the overall process.

The foundation of the 2017 Berkshire CEDS is the Vision Statement. The 2017 CEDS Vision Statement is:

“To create a diverse and robust economy that creates sustainable prosperity for all its residents. While capitalizing on the region’s heritage, intellectual vigor, cultural assets, agricultural and natural resources we will encourage innovation, collaboration and entrepreneurial spirit.”

From this statement, the CEDS Strategy Committee established six goals and thirty-one objectives to guide the CEDS process and future economic development. These goals and objectives represent a roadmap for the region's economic growth and stability. These measures build upon the unique assets and abilities of the region and support key clustering industries and emerging entrepreneurial innovators to generate regional and local economic activity and capacity, particularly in underutilized or economically distressed areas. The 2017 Berkshire CEDS goals and objectives are:

Goal # 1: Talent & Workforce

To stabilize and strengthen the region's workforce in order to meet the evolving needs of the employers in the region.

- Align public education offerings to meet the need of employers in the region.
- Align adult workforce training programs to meet the needs of employers in the region.
- Identify and address workforce issues associated with the region's aging population.
- Increase the percentage of young adults in the region's workforce.
- Increase employment in sectors that pay higher wages.
- Increase access in high schools and through higher education to technical training needed for available technical jobs not requiring a bachelor's degree.

Goal # 2: Entrepreneurship & Innovation

To create a diverse and robust business and entrepreneurial environment that encourages innovation and drives economic growth and opportunity.

- Ensure access to capital for all phases of business development.
- Provide direct support and training to small businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Increase awareness of available resources for business owners and entrepreneurs.
- Create a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Promote innovation and research and development at the region's manufacturing companies.
- Support the development of business incubators and co-working and maker spaces.

Goal # 3: Infrastructure, Site Readiness & Transportation

To invest in infrastructure and site improvements that support or facilitate economic growth in appropriate areas.

- Invest in a regional fiber optic network that connects businesses and homes throughout the region.
- Invest in water/wastewater infrastructure in areas appropriate for economic development.
- Invest in the region's transportation network.
- Invest in the region's public transportation system.

- Support the remediation of brownfield sites.
- Support site readiness activities.
- Support investments in the region's power grid and in renewable energy generation.

Goal # 4: Collaboration

To increase regional and inter-regional collaboration to better leverage economic development opportunities.

- Strengthen and expand the collaboration between community and regional leaders on regional economic development projects.
- Expand the capacity of the region's economic development organizations.
- Pursue economic development opportunities with neighboring regions.
- Pursue forestry based economic development opportunities with Franklin County.

Goal # 5: Industry & Occupational Clusters

To support and expand the region's industry and occupational clusters

- Protect and leverage the region's natural resources, historic sites, and cultural assets.
- Support the region's educational institutions and educational workers.
- Support the region's health care and medical science industries and health care workers.
- Support the region's skilled production workers.
- Support the region's advanced manufacturers, particularly the specialty materials cluster.

Goal # 6: Economic Resiliency

To support the resiliency of individual business and the regional economy during future economic disruptions.

- Strengthen and diversify the regional and local economy.
- Provide assistance to businesses to persevere through times of economic disruption.
- Develop regional strategies to respond to future economic disruptions.

The CEDS Strategy Committee took the following steps to establish goals and objectives and set a broad foundation for the CEDS report. It assessed the region's characteristic data, considered comments and concerns received during a public outreach initiative, defined the region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and looked at past, present and proposed investments in the region that support economic development and growth. The CEDS Strategy Committee also built upon previous studies and reports commissioned to analyze "cluster" industries in the region (*2006 Rural Clusters of Innovation: Berkshires Strategy Project*) and past CEDS planning efforts (*2001 CEDS and the draft 2004 CEDS*).

Berkshire County is a self-contained economic and social area with limited interrelationships with the surrounding regions, particularly the Capital Region in New York State and the Pioneer Valley Region to our east in Massachusetts. While those areas have experienced growth, Berkshire County has experienced more than forty years of steady population decline. This cumulative population loss, -13.8% since 1970, correlates with the significant number of manufacturing job losses that have continued into the 2000's. There are indications that population losses have slowed, according to the most recent U.S. Census Bureau population data (2010 Census); however, the 2014 estimate indicates that population losses are continuing and may have increased.

According to the American Community Survey of 2014 data, the labor force (population 16 years of age and over) was 68,715 or 53.3% of the total population. The 2016 annual average unemployment rate for Berkshire County was 4.3%, per the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development. By comparison, the annual average unemployment rate for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts was 3.7% and it was 4.9% for the United States, according to the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. This unemployment rate has decreased since its peak in 2010, like the state and nation. This is consistent with the weak recovery regionally and nationally. Unemployment data does not reflect the issue of underemployment or the quality of jobs. The issues of poverty and working poor continue to represent a significant portion of the population of Berkshire County, as evinced by the low per capita personal income of \$30,469.

Significant areas of strength and opportunity exist that could be used to leverage and facilitate economic development and growth and overcome the challenges for Berkshire County's economy. These include a strong presence of regional collaboration, a culturally and naturally rich environment, and a strong tradition of innovation.

The adaptive reuse and redevelopment of underutilized or vacant structures and properties could offset the limited amount of available developable land. A coordinated regional economic development process can better direct the use of limited state and federal funds to identified areas of need and prioritized projects and programs, primarily within existing built areas. The Berkshire Strategic Alliance, Inc is an organization being assembled to facilitate regional economic development activities. The region has an opportunity to maximize public and private investment, while preserving other important areas.

One of the EDA requirements for a CEDS is, "A section identifying and prioritizing vital projects, programs and activities that address the region's greatest needs or that will best enhance the region's competitiveness, including sources of funding for past and potential future investments (13 CFR §303.7). The Berkshire County Project Priority list was prepared to meet that requirement. It is an inventory of regional economic development proposals submitted for consideration by citizens, communities, and organizations located throughout the region, including proposals submitted by CEDS Strategy Committee members. These proposals represent economic development initiatives, programs, and projects, that if implemented would help diversify, stabilize, and strengthen the region's economy.

This list should be considered as an initial starting point for an ongoing process of identifying and tracking regionally significant economic development proposals. Although extensive efforts were made to assemble a comprehensive list from across the county, responses to solicitations for projects were uneven, not always representing the breadth of economic development activities occurring in the region, or allowing for a full evaluation by CEDS Committee members. In addition, some important proposed projects may have been missed. In developing this list, the CEDS Committee stressed that annual review and update will be an important way to keep identifying, refining, and improving the prioritization of regionally significant economic development projects in Berkshire County.

After considering all the submitted project proposals, the CEDS Strategy Committee developed a project prioritization structure and a list of the projects to be included on the priority list. This Project Priority List contains the following programs and projects.

Projects Representing the Greatest Needs Regionally

- Broadband for All
- Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Brownfields Program
- Connecting Activities High School Internship Program
- Berkshire Compact for Education & Berkshire County STEM Pipeline Network
- Keep Berkshires Farming
- Targeting Procurement Dollars to Strengthen the Regional Food Economy
- Berkshire Innovation Center at William Stanley Business Park

Projects that Enhance the Region: Physical Development Category

North Sub-Region

- Development of the Greylock Glen Outdoor Recreation & Environmental Center
- Greylock Mill Redevelopment (North Adams)
- Memorial School Redevelopment Project (Adams)

Central Sub-Region

- Berkshire Mall Reuse (Lanesborough)
- Crane Stationery Mill Redevelopment (Dalton)

South Sub-Region

- Redevelopment of the Historic Great Barrington Fairgrounds (Great Barrington)
- Monument Mills Area Reuse Planning (Housatonic Village (Great Barrington))
- Housatonic School Redevelopment (Housatonic Village (Great Barrington))
- New England Log Homes (Great Barrington)
- River School Redevelopment Project (Great Barrington)

- Adaptive Reuse of Mills - Niagara Mill (Lee)
- Miraval-Lenox Expansion at Cranwell (Lenox)
- Eastover (Lenox)
- Spring Lawn (Lenox)
- Elm Court – Front Yard/Travaasa (Stockbridge/Lenox)
- Tanglewood Expansion (Stockbridge/Lenox)

Projects that Enhance the Region: Programs, Initiatives, Studies, Education, or Other

- Adaptive reuse of “Great Estate” properties
- Adaptive Reuse of Mills
- Adaptive reuse of “Great Estate” properties
- Berkshire Creative Initiatives
- Berkshire Hills Internship Program

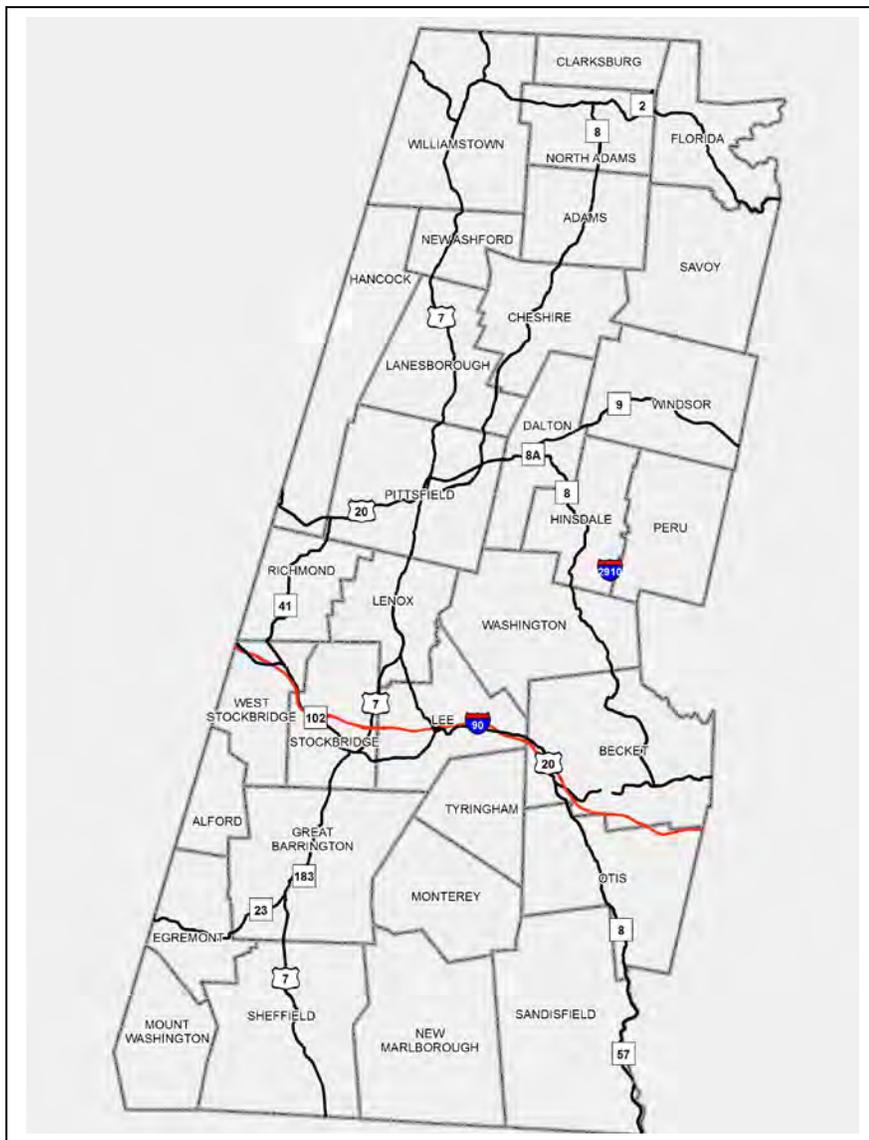
The CEDS process is an ongoing process. An *Action Plan for Economic Prosperity* is an implementation program designed to accomplish the overall vision and goals and objectives put forth in the CEDS document. A component of that Action Plan is an annual review of the progress that has been made, measured against defined performance measures. Another component of the Action Plan is to work with project proponents to refine and further develop proposals in order to present the strongest economic development proposals possible.

The Berkshire County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy emphasizes regional economic development planning. Through regional collaborations and partnerships, the CEDS process has and will continue to spur an energized conversation of the region’s economic future. Participants in the process have invested time and energy to insure this strategy is implemented. It is expected they will remain involved in the ongoing process that is the CEDS. As this CEDS planning process culminates in the publication of the five-year plan, it is recognized to be only the beginning of a route to economic prosperity and stability for the region.

DESCRIPTION OF THE REGION

Berkshire County is located on the western edge of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and is bounded on the north by Vermont, on the east by Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden counties, on the south by Connecticut, and on the west by New York. Its largest city and traditional county seat is Pittsfield. Berkshire County, originally a part of Hampshire County, was incorporated April 24, 1761. The Berkshire Hills are centered on Berkshire County, and the county itself is often referred to simply as the Berkshires. It exists today only as a historical geographic region, and has no county government.

Berkshire County Map



History

The Mahican Native American tribe lived in the area that now makes up Berkshire County until the early 18th century, when the first English settlers and frontiersmen appeared and began setting up farms and homesteads. In the 19th century, Berkshire County became popular with the American elite, which built what they called "cottages" throughout the countryside. When the Gilded Age ended in the early 20th century with the income tax, World War I, and the Great Depression; some of these cottages were torn or burned down, while others became prep schools, historic sites, or bed-and-breakfast inns.

Law and government

Of the fourteen Massachusetts counties, Berkshire County is one of eight that exists today only as a historical geographic region, and has no county government. Berkshire County government was abolished effective July 1, 2000, and all former county functions were assumed by state agencies, and there is no county council or commission. Local communities were granted the right to form their own regional compacts for sharing services, and the towns of Berkshire County have formed such a regional compact known as the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission.

Regional Access and Amenities

The Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90) provides prime highway access to the county, while other major routes (US Routes 7 & 20 and State Highways 2, 8, & 9) also transect the region. Berkshire County's location, about 2-1/2 hours from both the Boston and the New York City metro areas and about 1 hour from Albany, New York, and the Springfield/Hartford metro area, coupled with its outstanding beauty has made the region famous as a vacation destination. A large seasonal population of urbanites has second homes or stays in resorts and motels, camp at the numerous state parks, visit friends, or simply drive through the area. Pastoral amenities are complemented by major cultural facilities such as Tanglewood, Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Arts, Clark Art Institute, Norman Rockwell Museum, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, and the many well-regarded theater venues, including Shakespeare and Company in Lenox, Berkshire Theater Festival in Stockbridge, Williamstown Theater Festival, and Barrington Stage Company in Pittsfield.

Cities and Towns

Berkshire's municipal composition consists of two cities (North Adams and Pittsfield) and thirty towns (Adams, Alford, Becket, Cheshire, Clarksburg, Dalton, Egremont, Florida, Great Barrington, Hancock, Hinsdale, Lanesborough, Lee, Lenox, Monterey, Mount Washington, New Ashford, New Marlborough, Otis, Peru, Richmond, Sandisfield, Savoy, Sheffield, Stockbridge, Tyringham, Washington, West Stockbridge, Williamstown, and Windsor).

Geography

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 605,400 acres or 946 square miles, of which 927 square miles is land and 20 square miles (2.1%) is water. It is the second-largest county in Massachusetts by land area. Elevations through the Berkshires range from 3,491 feet at Mount Greylock, the highest point in the state, to 566 feet on the Hoosic River in the Town of Williamstown.

Running north-south through the county are the Hoosac Range of the Berkshire Hills in the eastern part of the county and the Taconic Mountains in the western part of the county. They are a source of pride for their beauty, and have marked the county's character. Due to their elevation, the Berkshires attract tourists and summer residents eager to escape the heat of the lowlands.

There are two main rivers systems in the county, the Hoosic River (in the north) and the Housatonic River (in the south). The Taconic Mountain Range to the west and the Berkshire Hills to the east dominate the landscape; thus, most of the region's development has been constrained or clustered to the valley lands. Approximately 7 percent of the county is developed, primarily for residential/commercial purposes. The remaining lands (approximately 93 percent) consist of water bodies, recreational land, forest, wetlands, and agriculture.

Demographics

The U. S. Census Bureau 2014 population estimate for Berkshire County is 128,715, a drop of 13.8% since the county's historic population peak of 149,402 persons was recorded in the 1970 Census. Currently, nearly half of the region's population is concentrated in its two cities; Pittsfield and North Adams. A breakdown of the data indicated that 92% of the county's population are white; while 2.8% are Black or African American; followed by two or more races (2.4%), and Asian (1.4%). In terms of ethnicity, 3.8% of the total population identifies as Hispanic or Latino.

Berkshires Regional Analysis and Influences

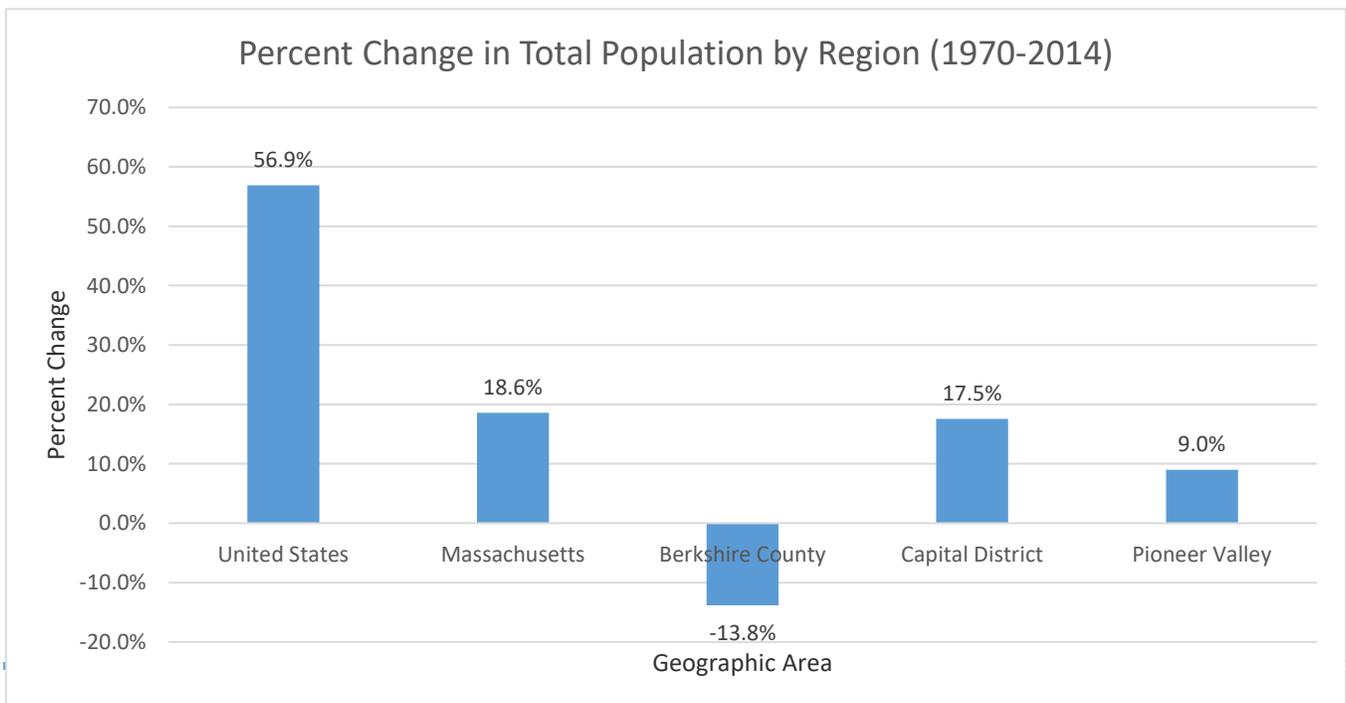
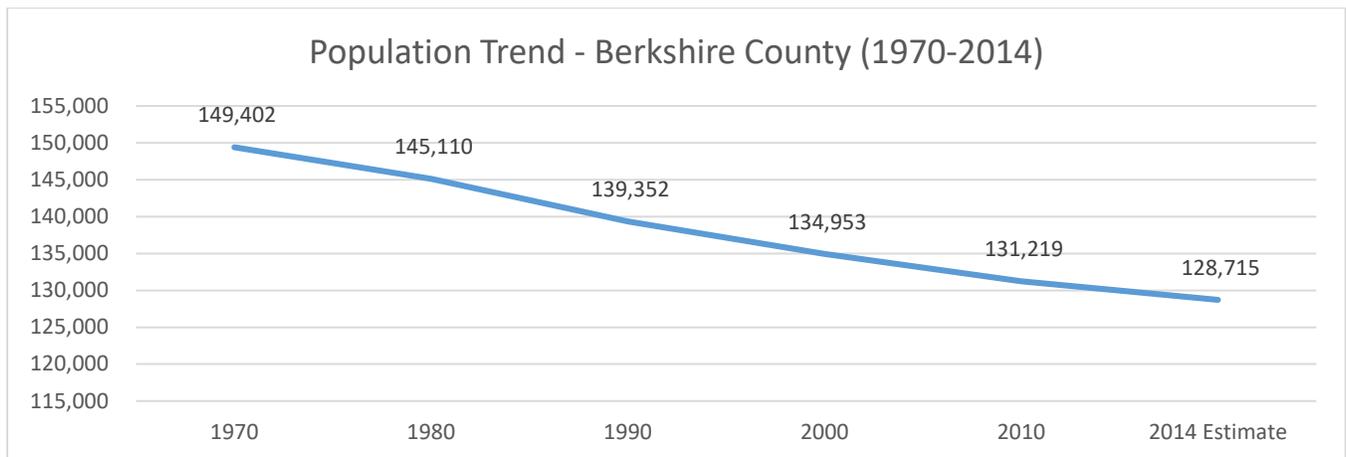
Berkshire County consists of 32 towns and cities, but is also economically influenced by adjacent regions of Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden Counties (Pioneer Valley) to the east in Massachusetts; and Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Schenectady Counties (Capital District) to the west in New York. There is also considerable cross commuting between adjoining Litchfield County, CT to the south and Bennington County, VT to the north. Due to the well-defined physical features, geographic relationships, political boundaries, historic traditions, internal social and economic interdependence Berkshire County represents a true region.

SUMMARY OF THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE BERKSHIRE REGION

Regional Demographics

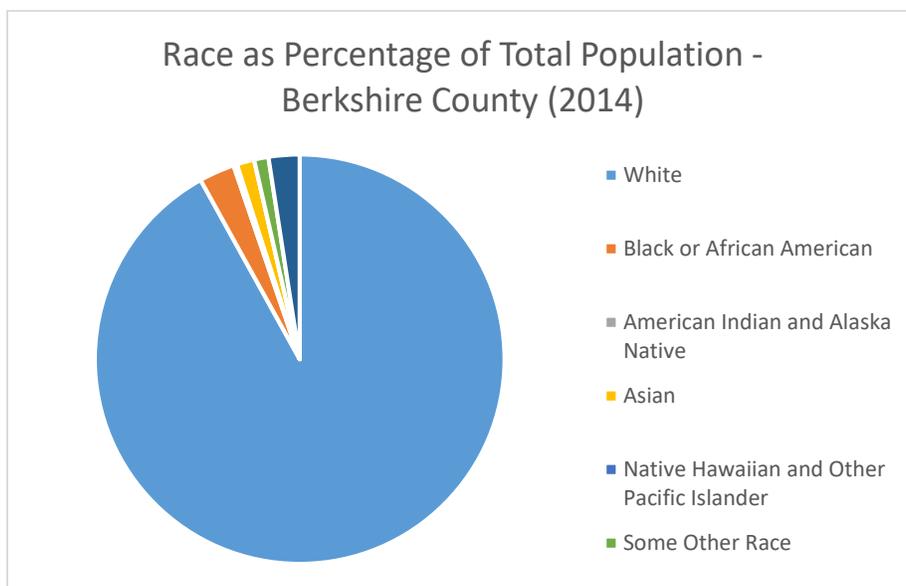
Population

The total population of Berkshire County is 128,715. The total population in the region has been declining since 1970. Between 1970 and 2014, the region experienced a 13.8% decline in total population. The population decline occurring in Berkshire County is not occurring in the surrounding regions. The Capital District of New York (+17.5%), Pioneer Valley (+9.0%) and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (+18.6%) all experienced increases in total population during this same time period. The continued loss of population from the region represents a major threat to the regional economy.



Race & Ethnicity

The population of Berkshire County is predominately White. Ninety-two percent of the region's total population identifies as White. The largest minority groups in the region are Black or African American (2.8%) followed by Two or More Races (2.4%) and Asian (1.4%). In terms of ethnicity, 3.8% of the total population identifies as Hispanic or Latino. The region is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. Between 2000 and 2014, the percentage of the total population identifying as White decreased by 3% with a corresponding increase in the percentage of other racial groups. Similarly, between 2000 and 2014, the percentage of the total population identifying as Hispanic or Latino increased by 2.1%. The steady increase in non-white population provides an opportunity to the region, if appropriate steps are taken to assimilate this growing proportion of the population.

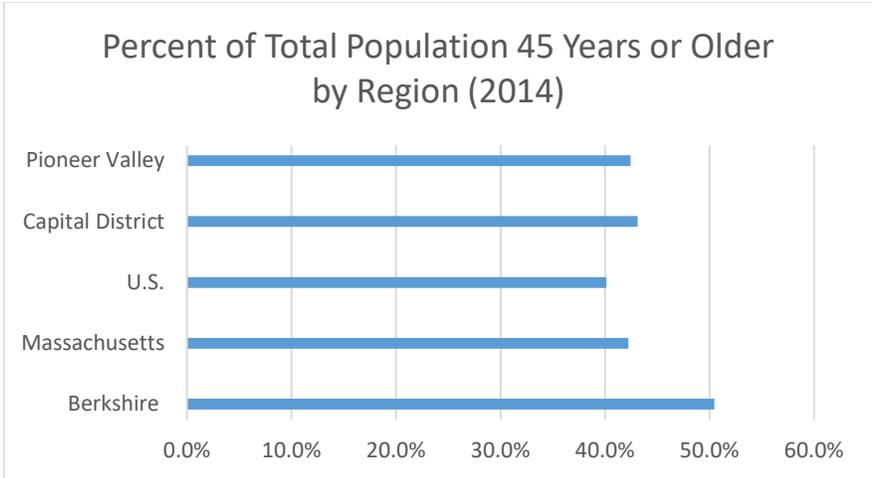


Gender

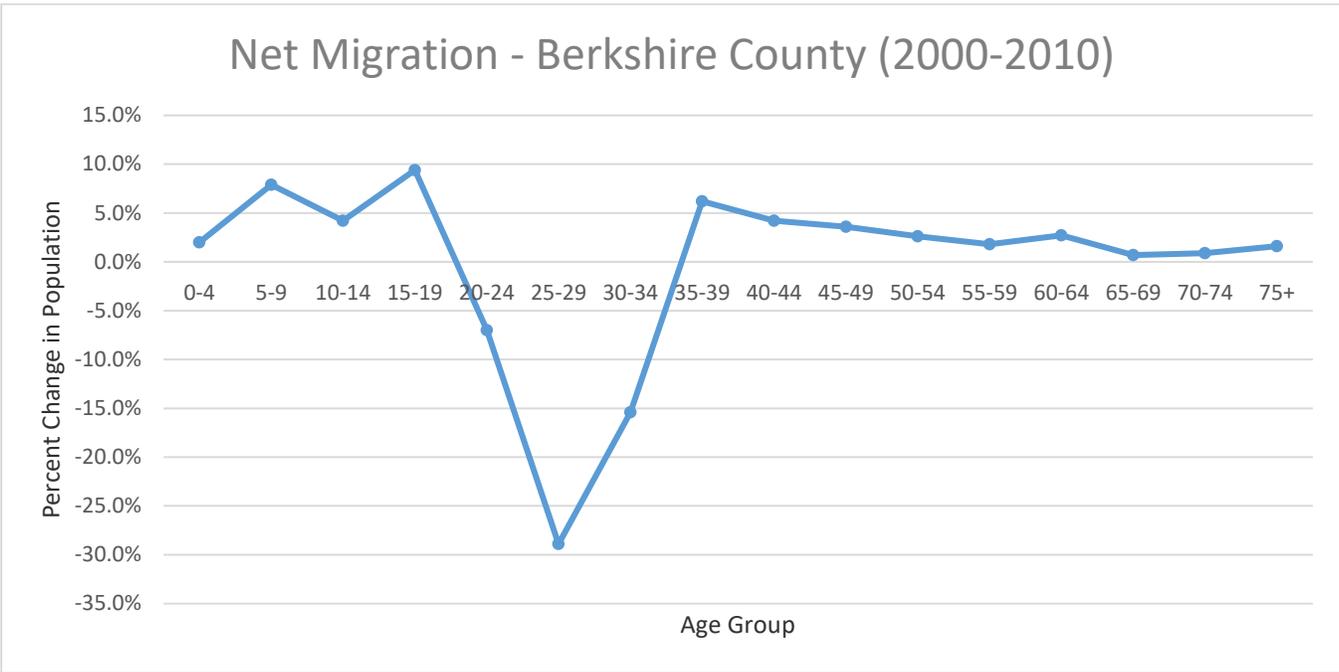
The total population in Berkshire County consists of 51.8% females and 48.2% males. The percentage of females to males is like that of the surrounding regions, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the United States.

Age

The median age for Berkshire County residents is 45.4 years compared to a median age of 39.6 years for the Capital District, 38.7 years for the Pioneer Valley and 39.3 for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The population of Berkshire County has a higher percentage of older adults than the surrounding regions, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the United States. In Berkshire County, over 50% of the total population is 45 years or older compared to 43% for the Capital District and 42.5% for the Pioneer Valley. The presence of a higher percentage of older adults presents opportunities and challenges for the region's economy.



In addition to addressing the opportunities and challenges of an aging population, the region needs to address the outmigration of young adults from the region. The chart below details the change in migration between 2000 and 2010 for the region which reveals a decrease in the number of young adults aged 20 to 35 in the region. The data indicates that young adults are leaving the region presumably to pursue higher education or work opportunities and these young adults are not returning. The flight of human capital from the region represents a major threat to the regional economy, especially in light of the increasing number of retirements as the “baby boomer” generation reaches retirement age. The in-migration of 35+ year-olds is a positive sign and may present an opportunity for the county.



Source: <http://www.netmigration.wisc.edu/>

Educational Attainment

Over 90% of the population over the age of 25 years old in Berkshire County has obtained a high school diploma or equivalency certificate. Thirty-one percent of the population in Berkshire County has obtained at least a bachelor's degree and 13.7% of the population has obtained one or more graduate degrees. Only 9.4% of the total population over 25 years old received an education below that required for a high school diploma.

In comparison to the surrounding regions, Berkshire County residents are more highly educated than the United States and the Pioneer Valley populations. Berkshire County's population is only surpassed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Capital District at the college and graduate degree level. The higher level of education versus the United State and the Pioneer Valley represent an opportunity, but continual work is needed to increase education levels to meet or exceed those in New York's Capital District and for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Level of Education	United States	Massachusetts	Berkshire County	Pioneer Valley	Capital District
No high school diploma	13.6	10.5	9.4	12.9	7.9
At least a high school graduate	86.4	89.6	90.6	87.1	92.1
At least a bachelor's degree	29.3	40.0	31.3	30.3	35.0
Graduate degree	11	17.4	13.7	13.3	15.7

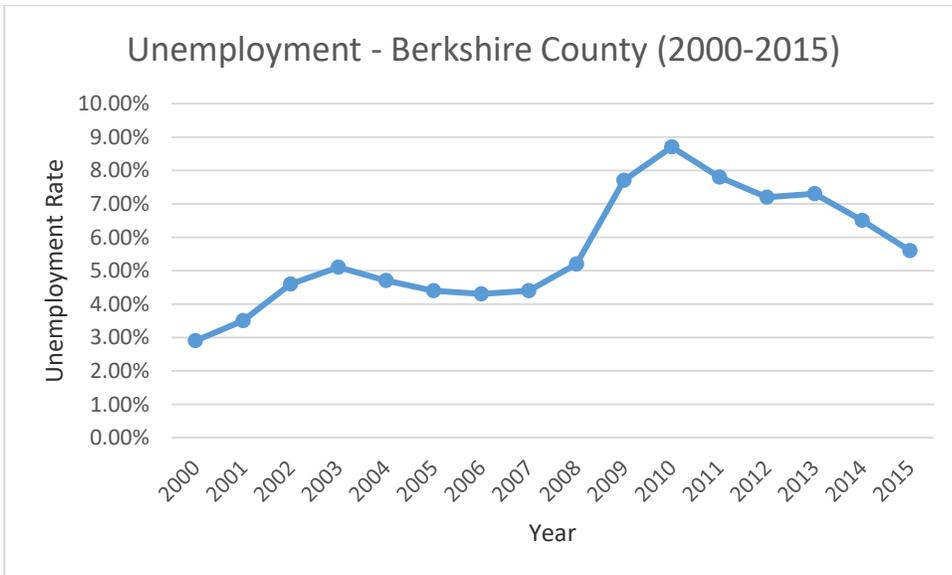
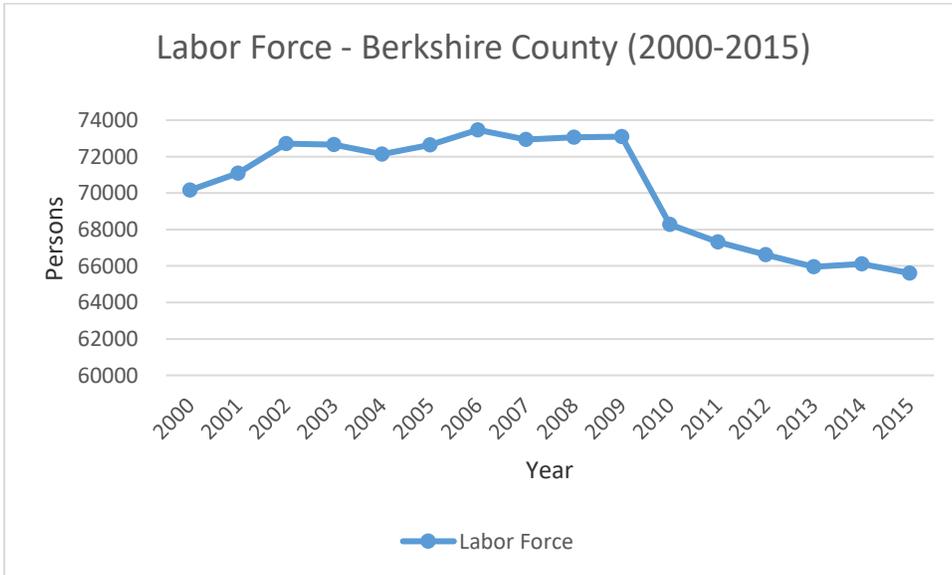
Economic Characteristics

Labor Force & Unemployment

According to the Massachusetts Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the labor force in Berkshire County declined from 65,152 to 64,345 between 4Q15 and 4Q16; representing a -1.2% change.¹ From 2000 to 2009 the labor force experienced a gradual increase until 2010 when the labor force began declining likely due to the economic recession. The labor force in the region continued to decline until 2013 when it increased for the first time since 2009; however, that decline has renewed. It is worth noting that the labor force has not increased to pre-recession levels. According to the U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, the annual unemployment rate in Berkshire County for 2016 is 4.3%; however, the monthly unemployment rate for 2017 has ranged between 5.05 and 5.3%. From 2000 to 2008, the annual unemployment rate fluctuated between 3.0% and 5.0%, and then peaked at nearly 9% in 2010. The unemployment rate is affected by both employment increases and labor force decreases. Some labor force decreases may be due to people leaving the labor force because they have become

¹ "What's Happening in Berkshire County? – A Review of recent Labor Market Conditions," Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, Prepared by Bob Vinson, LMI Works, March 2017 (BCREB Report).

discouraged about their prospects of finding work. Both the decline in the size of the labor market and the reduction in the unemployment rate indicate a tightening job market.



Age structure of the labor force

As shown by the charts below, the labor force (those persons who are willing and able to work) and those who are employed in Berkshire County trends older than the United States, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and surrounding regions.

The percentage of Berkshire County's labor force and number of persons employed in the 16 to 24-year-old age group is very similar to national and statewide figures, but the Pioneer Valley and Capital Region have a larger percentage in this age group. The larger number of universities, particularly UMass Amherst, the state's flagship university, and SUNY Albany may account for this difference. However, the percentage of workers in the 25 to 44-year-old age group drops significantly when compared to national, state, and neighboring regions' data. BRPC believes this is another clear indicator of the significant net out migration of this age group as shown on page 3. These data also show that more workers are remaining in the workforce in the 45 to 64-year-old and 65 and older age groups than in the comparative areas. Although it is unclear whether these older workers remain in the workforce by necessity or choice, their presence does offer the region a group of highly skilled and experienced workers to meet local needs.

	Labor Force (LF)				
	United States	Massachusetts	Berkshire County	Pioneer Valley (MA)	Capital District (NY)
Total	158,965,511	3,667,612	68,715	364,511	455,372
Ages 16-24	22,970,139	526,283	9,327	64,944	69,143
Percent of LF	14%	14%	14%	18%	15%
Ages 25-44	68,377,749	1,495,534	23,933	134,720	181,876
Percent of LF	43%	41%	35%	37%	40%
Ages 45-64	24,823,848	609,871	13,909	64,663	75,702
Percent of LF	16%	17%	20%	18%	17%
Ages >65	7,220,641	192,750	4,940	18,909	20,071
Percent of LF	5%	5%	7%	5%	4%

Source: US Census American Community Survey 2014

	Employment (EMP)				
	United States	Massachusetts	Berkshire County	Pioneer Valley (MA)	Capital District (NY)
Total	143,435,233	3,354,036	62,178	328,731	420,475
Ages 16-24	18,358,263	440,448	7,548	52,297	58,433
Percent of EMP	13%	13%	12%	16%	14%
Ages 25-44	62,085,164	1,378,874	21,672	121,421	168,256
Percent of EMP	43%	41%	35%	37%	40%
Ages 45-64	23,187,400	569,564	13,034	60,998	71,801
Percent of EMP	16%	17%	21%	19%	17%
Ages >65	6,779,441	180,387	4,597	17,963	18,720
Percent of EMP	5%	5%	7%	5%	4%

Source: US Census American Community Survey 2014

Work Status

In terms of work status, 43.1% of the total population is employed full time (>35 hours/week, 50 weeks/year), 35.9% is employed less than full time and another 21% of the population did not work. The percentage of full-time workers in Berkshire County is below the United States (47.1%), the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (48%), and the Capital District (50.9%) and slightly better than the Pioneer Valley (42.1). The region has a higher percentage of part-time workers than all the surrounding regions, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the United States. Part-time workers typically do not receive employment benefits such as health insurance or retirement plans and the wages paid to part-time workers are generally lower.

Region/Area	Worked Full Time (> 35 hours/week, 50 weeks/year)	Worked less than full time	Did not work
US	47.1%	27.6%	25.3%
Massachusetts	48.0%	31.3%	20.7%
Berkshire County	43.1%	35.9%	21%
Pioneer Valley	42.1%	34.1%	23.8%
Capital District	50.9%	28.8%	20.3%

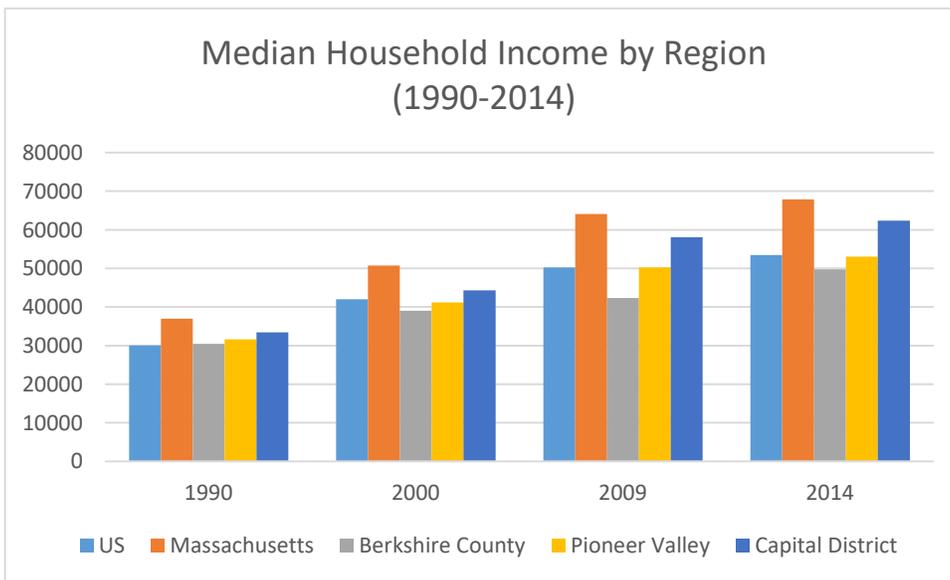
The region also has a higher percentage of self-employed workers compared to the surrounding regions, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the United States.

Class of Worker	United States	Massachusetts	Berkshire County	Pioneer Valley	Capital District
Civilian Employed	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Private Wage and Salary	75.6%	78.3%	75.4%	73.8%	70.8%
Government Workers	14.6%	12.7%	13.7%	17.4%	21.6%
Self-Employed Workers	9.8%	9.0%	11.0%	8.7%	7.6%

Median Household Income

The median household income for Berkshire County is \$49,737, which is below the median household income for the two surrounding regions, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the United States. Over the last fifteen years, the median household income increased by 27.38% which is similar to the increases that occurred in the United States and the Pioneer Valley, but less than the increases experienced in the Capital District and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The lower median household income may be the result of the lower wages paid to workers in the region and high levels of employment in sectors that pay low average weekly wages as discussed in greater detail in the following table.

Region/Area	1990	2000	2009	2014	% change in last 15 years
US	\$30,056	\$41,994	\$50,221	\$53,482	27.3%
Massachusetts	\$36,952	\$50,756	\$64,081	\$67,846	33.7%
Berkshire County	\$30,470	\$39,047	\$42,290	\$49,737	27.4%
Pioneer Valley	\$31,634	\$41,205	\$50,252	\$53,011	28.7%
Capital District	\$33,463	\$44,308	\$58,104	\$62,332	40.7%



Key Industry Sectors by Employment & Average Annual Wages

The key industry sectors in terms of employment are the Healthcare and Social Assistance sector, Retail Trade sector, Educational Services sector, and the Accommodation and Food Services sector. These four industry sectors employ 35,973 people, and account for more than half of the employment in the region. However, two of these industry sectors pay some of the lowest average weekly wages in the region, well below the region’s average weekly wage for all industries (\$810). The Accommodation and Food Services sector has the distinction of paying the lowest average weekly wage at \$355 and employs over 7,000 people. The four industry sectors that pay the highest average weekly wages in the region are the Utilities sector, the Finance and Insurance sector, the Professional and Technical Services sector, and the Manufacturing sector. In comparison, these four industry sectors employ only 9,347 people.

Top Industry Sectors (Average Monthly Employment)	Total Employment in Sector	Average Weekly Wage	Rank in Average Weekly Wage (1 = highest wages and 22 = lowest wages)
Healthcare and Social Assistance	12,243	\$874	13/22
Retail Trade	8,587	\$515	19/22
Educational Services	7,860	\$870	14/22
Accommodation and Food Services	7,283	\$355	22/22
Total	35,973		

In addition, workers in the region receive significantly lower average annual pay compared to workers in the same sector in other locations. Without exception, for every single industry sector the average annual pay per employee is less in Berkshire County than it is in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and with three exceptions the same is true when compared to the United States. Thus, the region not only has a high level of employment in the industry sectors that pay a lower average weekly wage compared to other sectors in the region, but all the sectors in the region earn a lower average annual pay compared to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and, for the most part the United States, likely contributing to the region’s lower median household income.

NAICS Sectors	Average Annual Pay (2014) - Berkshire County	Average Annual Pay (2014) - Massachusetts	Average Annual Pay (2014) – United States
NAICS 11 Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	\$23,894	\$54,076	\$31,564
NAICS 21 Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	\$48,883	\$62,207	\$93,288
NAICS 22 Utilities	\$94,591	\$109,966	
NAICS 23 Construction	\$51,277	\$68,631	\$56,368
NAICS 31-33 Manufacturing	\$68,466	\$83,404	\$60,840
NAICS 42 Wholesale trade	\$52,672	\$88,378	\$69,628
NAICS 44-45 Retail trade	\$26,772	\$30,042	\$29,328
NAICS 48-49 Transportation and warehousing	\$34,571	\$45,067	\$48,412
NAICS 51 Information	\$49,481	\$103,312	\$61,880
NAICS 52 Finance and insurance	\$71,444	\$137,868	\$84,292
NAICS 53 Real estate and rental and leasing	\$33,623	\$72,709	\$50,232
NAICS 54 Professional and technical services	\$70,596	\$114,084	\$84,604
NAICS 55 Management of companies and enterprises	\$61,698	\$126,647	\$100,620
NAICS 56 Administrative and waste services	\$38,471	\$42,224	\$36,140
NAICS 61 Educational services	\$50,159	\$63,392	\$49,868
NAICS 62 Health care and social assistance	\$45,443	\$52,792	\$46,696
NAICS 71 Arts, entertainment, and recreation	\$26,540	\$35,953	\$33,020
NAICS 72 Accommodation and food services	\$18,479	\$21,207	\$19,396
NAICS 81 Other services, except public administration	\$26,757	\$34,235	\$34,632

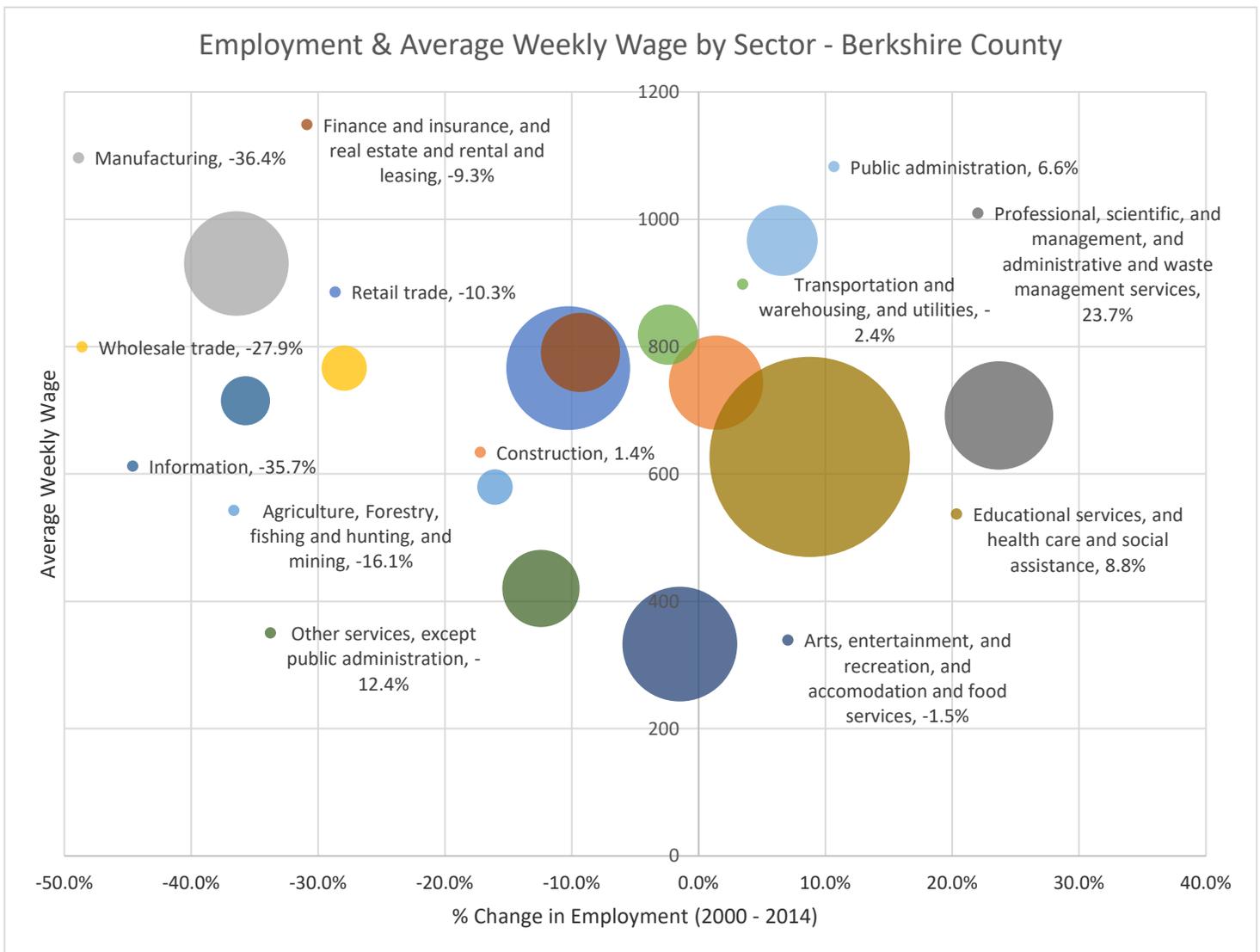
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages.

Change in Employment by Industry Sector Compared to Average Weekly Wage

The figure below depicts the change in employment by industry sector (horizontal axis), the average weekly wage for each industry sector (vertical axis) and the number of people employed in each industry sector (size of circle).

The key takeaways from the figure are:

- The Manufacturing sector pays one of the higher average weekly wages; however, this sector experienced the largest loss of employment during this time period (-36.4%).
- The Educational Services, Health Care and Social Assistance sector employs the largest number of people in the region and this sector increased employment by 8.8% over the time period.
- The Retail Trade Sector experienced a 10.3% decrease in employment over the time period.
- The Arts, Entertainment and Recreation and Accommodations and Food Services sector experienced a 1.5% decrease in employment and this sector pays the lowest average weekly wage in the region.

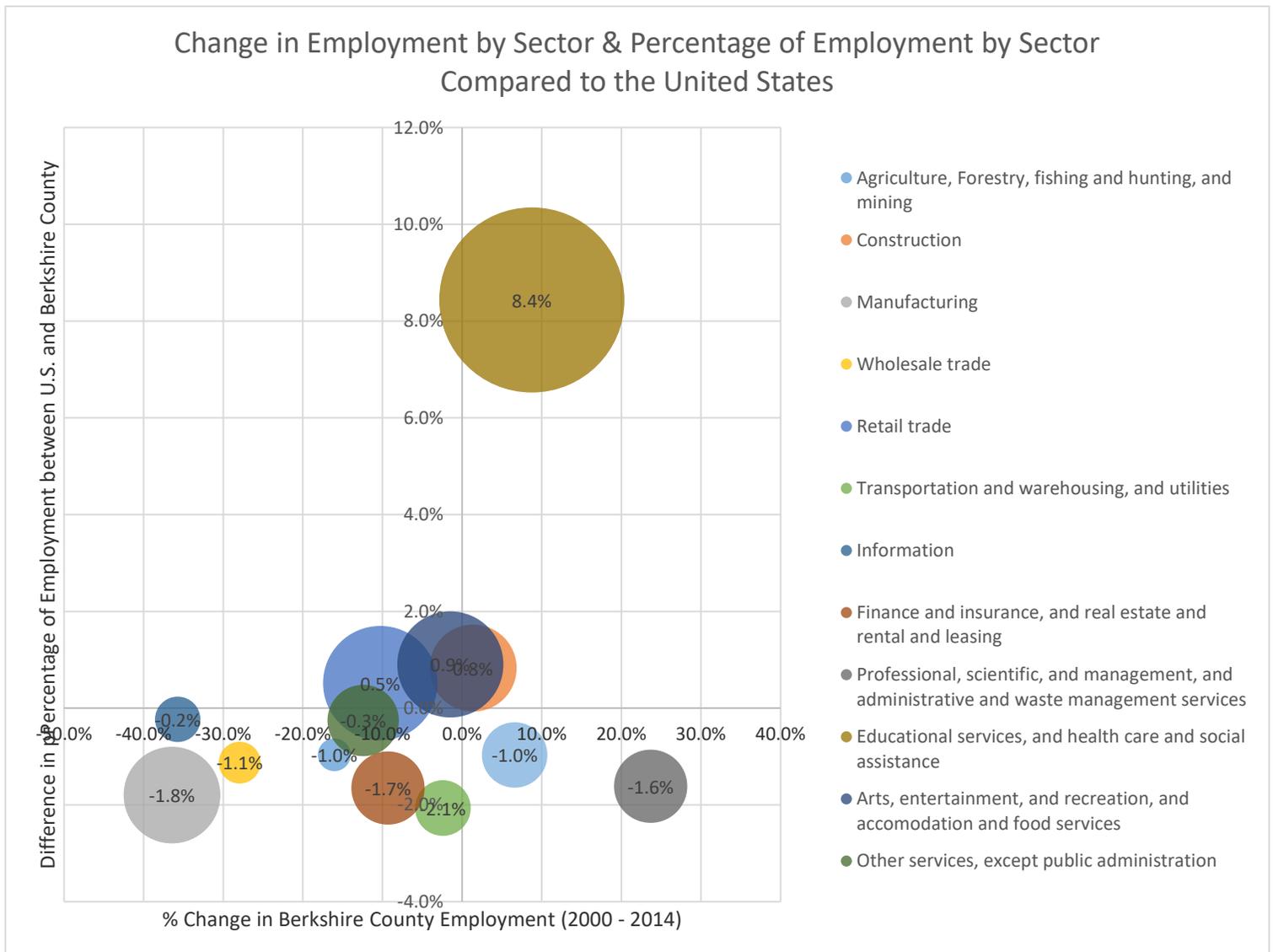


Change in Employment by Industry Sector Compared to the United States

The figure below depicts the percent change in employment by industry sector, the number of people employed in the industry sector and the difference in the percentage of employment between the region and the United States.

The key takeaways from the figure are:

- The Educational Services and Health Care and Social Assistance sector accounts for a greater percentage of employment in the region compared to the United States. This sector employs the largest number of people in the region and employment increased in this sector between 2000 and 2014.
- The Manufacturing sector accounts for a smaller percentage of employment in the region compared to the United States. This sector employs the fifth largest number of people in the region and employment significantly decreased in this sector between 2000 and 2014.



Industry Clusters

The industry cluster data displays the employment in the region by each industry sector. Those industry clusters with a higher location quotient and a larger number of establishments are likely to play a more significant role in the region's economy. The Service-providing, Education & Health Services, and Leisure & Hospitality sectors represent the strongest sectors in the region.

Industry Clusters	Establishments	Employment	Employment LQ	Wage LQ
Goods-producing	727	7,271	0.81	0.99
Natural resources & mining	41	251	0.27	0.16
Construction	520	2,426	.092	1.04
Manufacturing	166	4,594	.084	1.10
Service-providing	3,860	45,344	1.07	1.02
Trade, transportation, & utilities	854	10,818	0.93	0.83
Information	78	809	0.66	0.43
Financial activities	278	2,358	0.68	0.64
Professional & business services	602	4,754	0.57	0.61
Education & health services	1,023	15,382	1.68	2.01
Leisure & hospitality	609	9,056	1.41	1.66
Other services	417	2,167	1.15	1.10

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) 2013.

An examination of sub-sectors described by the Purdue Center for Regional Development within the major sectors as defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, shows very specific strength in certain areas not revealed in the sector as a whole. See Forestry & Wood Products compared to Natural Resources as an example. The Arts, Entertainment, Recreation & Visitor Industries (Leisure & hospitality) sector and the Education and Knowledge Creation (Education & health services) sectors are the two sectors that have a high location quotient and a higher number of establishments.

Industry Clusters	LQ	Employment	# of Establishments
Forest & Wood Products (including paper mills)	1.81	1,016	tbd
Education & Knowledge Creation	1.80	4,135	tbd
Glass & Ceramics	1.78	186	tbd
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation & Visitor Industries	1.77	4,228	tbd
Chemicals & Chemical Based Products	1.60	1,392	tbd
Biomedical/Biotechnical (Life Sciences) (including healthcare)	1.41	9,358	tbd

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) and Purdue Center for Regional Development (cluster definitions), 2013.

Those industry clusters with a higher location quotient for employment and a higher employment number are sectors in the region that employ a higher percentage of people compared to the United States and provide employment to a greater number of people in the region. The Biomedical/Biotechnical (Life Sciences) (including healthcare),

Education & Knowledge Creation and Arts, Entertainment, Recreation & Visitor Industries sectors all have high location quotients for employment and higher levels of employment in the region.

The Arts, Entertainment, Recreation & Visitor Industries and the Education and Knowledge Creation sectors have high location quotients for both establishments and employment suggesting that the region has a high number of these establishments which employ a greater percentage of people compared to the United States.

Occupation Clusters

The occupation cluster data displays the total number of people working in an occupation, the percentage of people in that occupation compared to the total employment in the region and the location quotient for each occupation. Those occupations with a location quotient above 1.0 indicate a greater percentage of people working in that occupation compared to the United States. The occupation cluster share of total employment indicates what percentage of the total employment that occupation represents in the region. The occupation cluster helps to identify whether a skilled workforce is present in the area which has the potential to attract businesses that require a specialized and skilled workforce.

Occupation Clusters	Occupation Cluster Employment LQ	Occupation Cluster Employment	Occ. Cluster Share of Total Emp.
Postsecondary Education and Knowledge Creation	1.48	1,385	1.70%
Arts, Entertainment, Publishing, and Broadcasting	1.47	2,829	3.40%
Health Care and Medical Science (Aggregate)	1.43	6,661	8.10%
Primary/Secondary and Vocational Education, Remediation & Social Services	1.37	5,919	7.20%
Building, Landscape, and Construction Design	1.34	491	0.60%
Engineering and Related Sciences	1.16	862	1.00%
Personal Services Occupations	1.13	2,261	2.70%
Skilled Production Workers	1.01	5,826	7.10%
Public Safety and Domestic Security	1	987	1.20%

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. Complete Employment Statistics

The occupations in the region that represent a higher percentage of employment compared to the United States are the Health Care and Medical Science (Aggregate), Primary/Secondary and Vocational Education (education includes public and private education), Remediation & Social Services, and Skilled Production Workers. The greater concentration of health care and medical science (aggregate) jobs is likely attributable to the region’s largest employer – Berkshire Health Systems, also the region’s largest healthcare provider, which serves the region’s older than average population. The higher percentage of skilled production workers indicates that the occupation is still in demand in the region despite the severe decline in the manufacturing sector.

Major Employers in the Region

The following businesses/organizations are the top employers in the region.

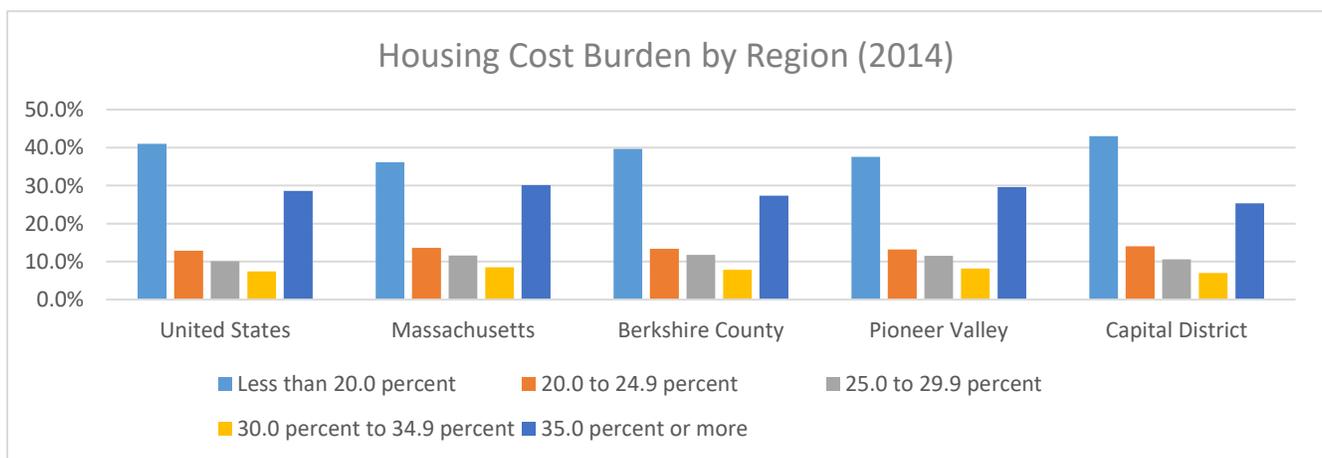
Companies Employing 1,000 to 4,999 Employees	NAICS – Industry Sector
Berkshire Healthcare Systems	Educational Services, Healthcare, and Social Assistance
General Dynamics Advanced Information Systems	Manufacturing

Companies Employing 500 to 999 Employees	NAICS – Industry Sector
Big Y World Class Market	Retail Trade
Berkshire Medical Center Hillcrest Campus	Educational Services, Healthcare, and Social Assistance
Canyon Ranch in the Berkshires	Accommodation and Food Services
Crane & Co	Manufacturing
Price Chopper	Retail Trade
SABIC Innovative Plastics	Manufacturing
Walmart	Retail Trade
Williams College	Educational Services, Healthcare, and Social Assistance

The region's two largest employers are Berkshire Healthcare Systems and General Dynamics Information Systems. Of the top ten largest employers, three are in the Retail Trade sector, three are in the Educational Services, Healthcare, and Social Assistance sectors, and three are in the Manufacturing sector, but unfortunately one of them, Sabic Innovative Plastics, announced its departure to Texas in 2015.

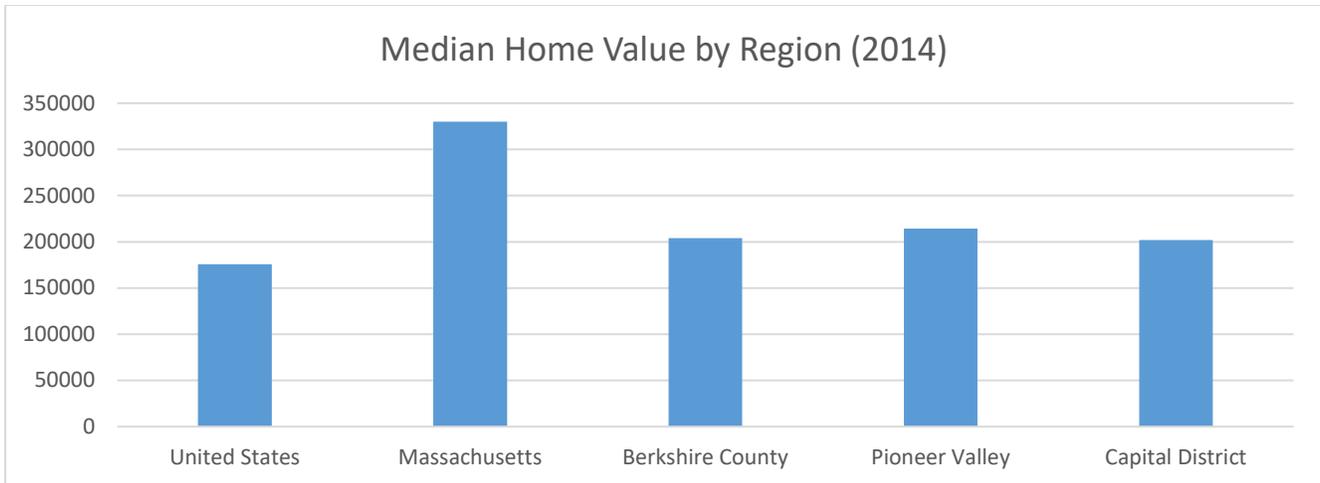
Housing Affordability

Compared to the surrounding regions, housing in the region is more affordable. Analyzing housing costs as a percent of income is one way to show whether the residents of a region are burdened by housing costs. The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development defines the payment of 30% or more of a person’s gross monthly income on housing costs as being housing cost burdened. Housing costs are defined as principle, interest, taxes, and insurance (PITA) for homeowners, or rent plus utilities for renters. The region has a lower percentage of housing cost burdened residents than the Pioneer Valley, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the United States. This suggests that despite lower wages a higher percentage of residents in the region are able to afford housing.



Another indicator of housing affordability is the median home value of the region. The lower the median home value the more likely a person should be able to afford a house. Berkshire County has a lower median home value than the Pioneer Valley and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, but a higher median home value compared to the Capital District and the United States. However, when viewed from the sub-regional level housing affordability is an issue in Southern Berkshire County, where the median home price is \$365,480, compared to a median home price in Northern Berkshire County of \$242,260.² Additionally, it has been reported that the quality of the housing stock in certain neighborhoods in Pittsfield, North Adams and Adams is an issue.

² Source: MassRealty based upon information obtained from the Berkshire County Board of Realtors or its Multiple Listing Service. www.massrealty.com/berkshires/market-report.



Municipal Finances

The thirty-two municipalities in the region depend heavily on financial aid from the state and the collection of local property taxes to raise revenue in order to provide their residents with essential services (education, road maintenance, public safety, etc.). Municipal aid from the state was severely cut during the Great Recession and for fiscal year 2016 remains \$334 million below the fiscal year 2008 level of funding, without adjusting for inflation. According to the Massachusetts Municipal Association, since the Great Recession cities and towns have increased their reliance on the local property tax, which is at its highest point of the Proposition 2 ½ era. Even though unemployment has decreased to near 3%, jobs in the region have shifted to lower wage employment sectors; therefore, many residents don't have the financial ability to pay higher property taxes. Yet municipal costs continue to rise due in part to long term pension and retiree health insurance costs that are rising faster than revenues.

Municipal finances are also constrained by Proposition 2 ½. Proposition 2 ½ is a state law that places two restrictions on the amount of property taxes that a municipality can levy each fiscal year. First, a community cannot levy in excess of 2.5% of the total full and fair cash value of all taxable real and personal property in the community ("levy ceiling"). Second, a community's levy is constrained in the amount it may increase from year to year ("levy limit). Each year a community's levy limit is automatically increased by 2.5 % over the prior fiscal year plus any increase in property valuations. Any increase in the local property tax beyond the Proposition 2 ½ limit requires a vote of the majority of local voters. If local voters do not approve relief from the constraints of Proposition 2 ½ the municipality is unable to raise that additional revenue and those activities or projects that were scheduled for completion must be delayed until alternative sources of funding are obtained. Regardless of an override vote, a community's total taxes cannot exceed its tax levy ceiling. The three largest municipalities in the region (Pittsfield, North Adams, and Adams) are all forecasted to reach their levy ceiling in the next few fiscal years.

Infrastructure

Airports

The region is located approximately 60 minutes from Albany International Airport and approximately 90 minutes from Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks, CT. The region has two municipally operated airports in Pittsfield (Pittsfield Municipal Airport) and North Adams (Harriman and West Airport). Neither airport has regularly scheduled commercial passenger service. One additional private airport is located in Great Barrington, MA (Great Barrington Airport).

Highways, Local Roads & Bridges

Interstate 90 (I-90) passes through the region east to west passing through Becket, Otis, Lee, Stockbridge, and West Stockbridge. I-90 interchanges are located in Lee and West Stockbridge. The interchanges are located approximately 20 minutes from Pittsfield and nearly 60 minutes from North Adams. The lack of access to I-90 from the region's most populous areas is problematic. U. S. Routes 7 and 8 pass through the region from north to south and U. S. Route 20 and State Route 2 run east to west. A number of other state numbered highways crisscross the region. Except in a few instances the state numbered highways are two lane roads. Most of the state numbered highways are maintained by MassDOT and the local roads are maintained by the communities. Many of the region's local roads and bridges are in moderate to poor condition and are in need of significant investment that municipalities have difficulty funding.

Railroads

Two main rail corridors are in use across the region. The CSX Boston Line passes through the center of the region east to west, including Pittsfield. The CSX Boston Line carries over 10 million tons of freight annually between Boston, MA and Selkirk, NY (outside of Albany). Amtrak provides limited passenger rail service from the Intermodal Transportation Center in Pittsfield. The Pan Am Railway/Pan Am Southern (PAR/PAS) Main Freight Line passes through the northern portion of the region including North Adams. The PAR/PAS Main Freight line carries over 5 million tons of freight annually between Boston, MA and Rotterdam, NY (outside of Albany). The region is also served by two secondary rail corridors. The Berkshire Line passes through the region north to south from Pittsfield to Danbury, CT. The Housatonic Railroad operates as a Class C freight railroad along the Berkshire Line. In 2015, MassDOT acquired the Berkshire Line from the Housatonic Railroad. The rail infrastructure on the Berkshire Line is in poor condition and needs total replacement of the approximately 100-year-old rail. The other secondary rail corridor owned by MassDOT runs from Adams to North Adams. A limited amount of freight is carried through this rail corridor and the Berkshire Scenic Railway Museum operates a tourist train between Adams and North Adams. The track on the Adams branch line was totally replaced in 2015 and is in excellent condition.

Broadband Internet

The majority of communities in the region generally lack access to high speed broadband internet service. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) defines broadband as a minimum 25 Mbps download speed and 3 Mbps upload speed. Nineteen of the thirty-two communities in Berkshire County were considered entirely unserved as of 2015 under this standard. In February 2014, the Massachusetts Broadband Initiative (MBI) completed the installation of the MassBroadband 123 fiber optic network. The MassBroadband 123 network is an open-access middle mile fiber optic network that stretches across 123 towns in western and central Massachusetts, including every community in Berkshire County. However, the MassBroadband 123 network does not connect to many homes or businesses. In terms of an analogy, the MassBroadband 123 network amounts to a limited access highway constructed through the region without the on and off ramps. The last mile portion (on and off ramps) needs to be installed before the MassBroadband 123 network benefits homeowners and businesses. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts had originally allocated \$50 million to assist the 123 communities with the build out of the last mile network in 2013, but utilization was stalled for a variety of reasons for over two years.

In 2016, progress began to be made, with three towns being provided broadband service through their cable TV provider. Over the past year, considerable progress is being made to serve most of the unserved communities, either through expansion of cable TV service areas into other towns, or planned construction of fiber-to-the-home in others. The specific outcomes are still being determined across the county. A remaining major issue is whether cable TV broadband solutions are adequate to support robust economic growth, particularly in a region which has an important economic cluster in “creative economy” businesses and self-employed, many of which are dependent on large digital file sharing with collaborators in other states and countries. Discussion among a few of the largest municipalities regarding the need to provide fiber-to-the home solutions in more communities was initiated early in 2017.

Wastewater Treatment & Water Supply

Fifteen Berkshire County municipalities provide wastewater treatment to all or a portion of their residents and businesses from 8 publicly owned wastewater treatment plants. Of those publicly owned wastewater treatment plants, two plants serve multiple communities. Many of the region’s public sewer lines have exceed their anticipated useful life. While most of the wastewater treatment plants have adequate capacity, they also have capacity constraints. Two have considerable capacity as they were designed for much larger flows when more industry was present. However, new EPA discharge regulations are requiring substantial capital investments in some of the treatment plants. Due to the high cost of maintaining and upgrading this infrastructure, lines are generally upgraded when larger capital improvement projects are occurring or on an as needed basis, often after a break or leak.

In seventeen communities in the region residents, or a portion of residents, are able to access public water supplies. Of the seventeen communities where public water is available, fourteen of the communities provide water through a municipal water system and the remaining three are served by private water companies. Many of the region’s water lines are also well beyond their anticipated useful life and need to be replaced, but constraints on municipal

finances oftentimes prevent this from occurring in a proactive and timely manner. However, all municipal water plants have surplus capacity available to serve additional customers. There are some main water lines in critical areas which deliver insufficient capacity to serve economic development needs. This can be particularly true to provide fire flow protection. Berkshire County is a “water rich” region and overall water availability for economic development needs is very good.

Public Transportation

Public transportation is limited in the region. The Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA) operates the public transportation system that consists almost exclusively of buses and vans. Due to the large geographic size of the region and the dispersed nature of the population the BRTA is not able to provide full coverage throughout the region. Instead the BRTA bus routes focus on the most populated areas in the region from North Adams to Great Barrington. The BRTA operates a limited schedule at night and during weekends which creates difficulties for workers that work non-traditional hours to use the service.

Economic Distress Criteria

Several areas within the region meet the Economic Development Administration’s definition of economic distress, but the region in its entirety does not. An area is considered economically distressed if it has either (1) an unemployment rate that is, for the most recent 24-month period for which data is available, at least one percentage point greater than the national average unemployment rate; or (2) has a per capita income that is, for the most recent 24-month period for which data is available, eighty (80) percent or less of the national average per capita income.

Berkshire County as a region does not meet the economic distress criteria for either unemployment or per capita income. However, certain municipalities within the region meet the criteria and these are Hinsdale, Mount Washington, New Ashford, North Adams, and portions of Pittsfield.

Economic Distress Criteria - Primary Elements	Region	U.S.	Threshold Calculations
24-month average Unemployment Rate (BLS) <i>(period ending Feb. 2017)</i>	4.8	5.0	(0.2)
2015 Per Capita Money Income (5-Year ACS)	\$30,469	\$28,930	105.32%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 24-month period ending February 2017; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

Economically Distressed Areas in the Region Based on Unemployment Rate

Area	Unemployment Rate
Hinsdale	6.1
Mount Washington	6.2
New Ashford	6.8
North Adams	6.8
United States	5.0

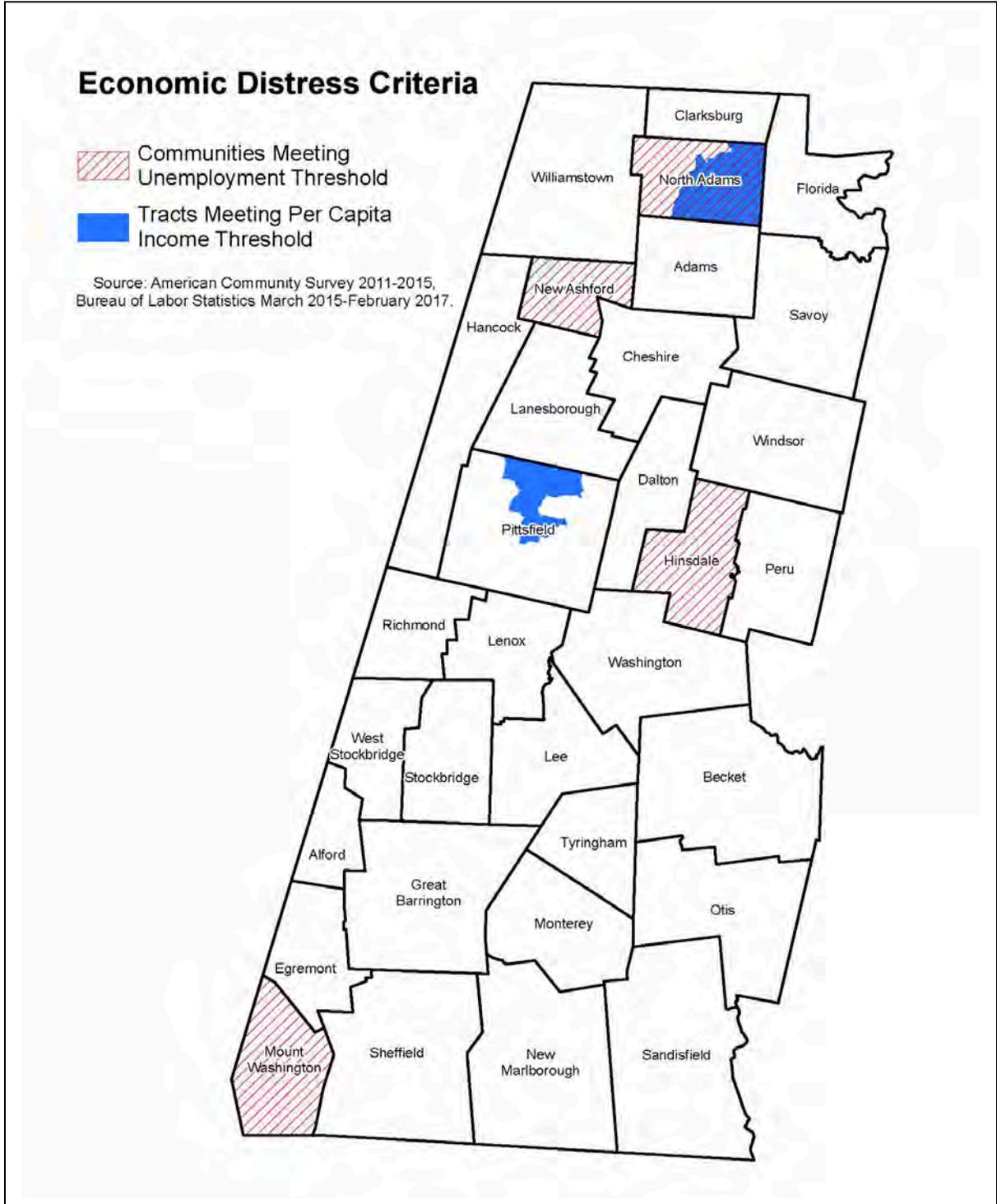
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 24-month period ending February 2017

Economically Distressed Areas in the Region Based on Per Capita Income

Census Tract	Municipality	PCMI 2015	Threshold Calculation
9001	Pittsfield	\$15,659	54.1%
9002	Pittsfield	\$17,196	59.4%
9004	Pittsfield	\$22,304	77.1%
9006	Pittsfield	\$15,155	52.4%
9213	North Adams	\$21,280	77.0%
9214	North Adams	\$20,882	72.2%
	United States	\$28,930	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates (2011-2015)

Economic Distress Criteria Map



REGIONAL STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES & THREATS

Strengths

The region has a number of relative competitive advantages that contribute to the success and vitality of the region's economy.

Cultural Venues & Attractions: The region's cultural venues and attractions are important economic assets that contribute to the vibrancy of the region's economy. Many prominent cultural venues are located in the region, including the Norman Rockwell Museum, Tanglewood, Jacob's Pillow, Clark Art Institute and the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (Mass MOCA). A number of smaller cultural venues exist in the region, such as the Mahaiwe Theatre, Colonial Theatre, Chesterwood, the Mount and the cultural venues associated with the region's educational institutions. In addition to the cultural venues, the region is home to a number of popular events and festivals that draw people to the region in large numbers, such as the Williamstown Theater Festival, Solid Sound Festival, and the Berkshire International Film Festival. The region's significant number of cultural venues and attractions provide employment opportunities and contribute significantly to the region's quality of life and make it attractive for potential workforce and investment.

The region's location quotient of 1.82 for Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, and Visitors Industries for establishments indicates that the region has a higher concentration of such establishments compared to the United States.

Natural Attractions & Outdoor Recreation Opportunities: The region's natural attractions and outdoor recreation opportunities contribute to the vibrancy of the region's economy. The region contains a number of state parks, hundreds of miles of hiking trails (including the Appalachian Trail), downhill and cross-country ski areas, outdoor aerial adventure parks, a regional bike path, miles of snowmobile trails, and high quality lakes and streams for fishing and recreation. A number of well-known and unique natural attractions are located in the region, such as Mt. Greylock (the highest point in Massachusetts), October Mountain State Forest (the largest state park in Massachusetts) and Bash Bish Falls (the highest waterfall in Massachusetts). The region's significant number of natural attractions and outdoor recreation opportunities provide employment opportunities and contribute significantly to the region's quality of life and make it attractive for potential workforce and investment.

Educational Institutions & Resources: The region's educational institutions are important economic assets that contribute to the vibrancy of the regional economy. The region's educational institutions prepare the next generation of people to become productive members of the workforce while providing a significant number of employment opportunities in the region. The region has four institutions of higher education (Williams College, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Bard College at Simon's Rock, and Berkshire Community College) and a number of private and public primary and secondary schools, including two vocational high schools that prepare students for careers in the skilled trades. The region's location quotient of 1.27 for Education and Knowledge Creation establishments indicates that the region has a higher concentration of such establishments compared to the United States. In addition, the Educational Services sector employs 7,860 people – the third largest sector by employment in the region.

The region is unique in that it can provide a person with an education from pre-k through a graduate degree without ever having to leave the region.

Value-Added Agriculture: The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Business Development define value-added agriculture as a change in the physical state or form of the product (such as milling wheat into flour or making strawberries into jam); the production of a product in a manner that enhances its value, as demonstrated through a business plan (such as organically produced products); or the physical segregation of an agricultural commodity or product in a manner that results in the enhancement of the value of that commodity or product (such as an identity preserved marketing system). As a result of the change in physical state or the manner in which the agricultural commodity or product is produced and segregated, the customer base for the commodity or product is expanded and a greater portion of revenue derived from the marketing, processing or physical segregation is made available to the producer of the commodity or product.

Value added agriculture might be a means for farmers to capture a larger share of the consumer food dollar. Examples include direct marketing; farmer ownership of processing facilities; and producing farm products with a higher intrinsic value (such as identity-preserved grains, organic produce, hormone-free beef, free-range chickens; etc.), for which buyers are willing to pay a higher price than for more traditional bulk commodities. Value-added agriculture is regarded by some as a significant rural development strategy. Small-scale, organic food processing, non-traditional crop production, agri-tourism, and bio-fuels development are examples of various value-added projects that have created new jobs in some rural places.

Strong Occupation Clusters: The presence of a strong occupation cluster indicates the existence of a concentration of skilled and trained workers in that occupation in the region. A strong occupation cluster is an occupation cluster which has a high location quotient and constitutes a higher percentage of the region's total employment relative to other occupations. Companies in search of skilled workers may be attracted to areas with

strong occupation clusters in order to find workers with relevant skills or transferrable skills. The strong occupation clusters for the region are Health Care and Medical Science, Primary/Secondary and Vocational Education, Remediation & Social Services, and Skilled Production Workers.

Regional Collaboration: The continuing collaboration between the region’s local governments, businesses, and non-profit organizations is vital to the success of the region’s economy. Through collaboration the region’s local governments, businesses, and non-profit organizations apply their resources to solve a shared problem or achieve a mutual objective. One example of regional collaboration is the Berkshire Education Compact. The Compact consists of 150 members that represent state government, local governments, local school committees, institutions of higher education, businesses, and nonprofit organizations. The goal of the Compact is to improve access to education, training, and lifelong learning opportunities; and to ensure Berkshire County is a competitive location for the new technology and knowledge-based economy. This attitude of regional collaboration is being seen in the efforts to address the effect of student population declines on the region’s public primary and secondary schools.

Proximity of the Region to Major Metropolitan Areas: The region is located in relative close proximity to a number of metropolitan areas with a combined population of 26.9 million. The businesses, organizations, and individuals located in these metropolitan areas represent economic opportunities for the region. For example, the booming life sciences sector in Boston is providing opportunities for companies located in Berkshire County, such as Berkshire Sterile Manufacturing; however, the extent of the economic connections between the region and the metropolitan areas have not been fully exploited. These opportunities are somewhat tempered by the lack of interstate highway access and limited passenger rail service as discussed in *Weaknesses* below. The tourism industry also benefits from the proximity of the region to these metropolitan areas. According to 1 Berkshire a large percentage of visitors to the region come from the New York City or Boston areas.

Metropolitan Area	Metropolitan Area Population	Distance from Pittsfield, MA to (city)	Approximate Driving Time from Pittsfield, MA to (city)
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	20,092,883	152 miles (New York, NY)	3.5 hours (New York, NY)
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA	4,732,161	138 miles (Boston, MA)	3 hours (Boston, MA)
Hartford-West Hartford, East Hartford, CT	1,214,295	81 miles (Hartford, CT)	1.6 hours (Hartford, CT)
Albany- Schenectady-Troy, NY	880,167	40 miles (Albany, NY)	1 hour (Albany, NY)

Interstate Railroad Access: The region is strategically located on two interstate railroad corridors. The CSX Boston Line operates between Selkirk, NY (outside of Albany, NY) and Boston, MA passing through Pittsfield and several other communities in the region. The CSX Boston Line handles the largest amount of freight in Massachusetts and New England carrying over 10 million tons of freight annually. The Pan Am Railroad/Pan Am Southern (PAR/PAS) Main Freight Line operates between Rotterdam, NY (outside of Albany, NY) and Boston, MA

passing through North Adams and several other communities in the region. The PAR/PAS Main Freight Line carries over 5 million tons of freight annually. Secondary lines provide connections to companies located between Pittsfield, MA south to Danbury, CT and to companies in Adams, MA. The region is well positioned for companies to take advantage of the freight rail access into and out of the region.

Housing Affordability: The region provides affordable housing opportunities. The availability of affordable housing for employees is an important consideration for employers. The region has a lower percentage of housing cost burdened individuals compared to the Pioneer Valley, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the United States. An individual is considered to be housing cost burdened when 30% or more of their gross monthly income is spent on housing costs. The region also has a lower median home value for single family homes compared to the Pioneer Valley and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts indicating that purchasing a single-family home in the region is less expensive. However, when viewed from the sub-regional level housing affordability is an issue in Southern Berkshire County, where the median home price is \$365,480, compared to a median home price in Northern Berkshire County of \$242,260.³ Additionally, it has been reported that the quality of the housing stock in certain neighborhoods in Pittsfield, North Adams and Adams is an issue.

Overall Water Availability and Sewage Treatment Capacity: Water for economic development purposes is available in general, simply due to Berkshire County being a water-rich region which typically does not suffer from severe, prolonged droughts. Public water treatment plants across the region generally have considerable capacity available. The sewage treatment plants in Pittsfield (which serves Dalton and Hinsdale, and parts of Lenox, Lanesborough, and Richmond) and Adams were designed for large manufacturing plants which are no longer in the region and therefore significant capacity to serve additional sewage flow is available.

³ Source: MassRealty based upon information obtained from the Berkshire County Board of Realtors or its Multiple Listing Service. www.massrealty.com/berkshires/market-report.

Weaknesses

The region has some relative competitive disadvantages that keeps the regional economy from realizing its potential.

Lack of Access to Broadband Internet: The majority of towns in the region lack access to broadband internet service. However, that picture is rapidly changing and in the next 2-3 years, all communities should have almost universal availability of broadband service meeting at least the minimum FCC standard for broadband. Most businesses communicate with customers, clients, and suppliers through the internet every day. According to the Small Business Administration, access to broadband correlates with improved worker efficiency and productivity which translates to reduced costs and increased profits. However, from a strategic competitive advantage standpoint, the fact that all of the region's larger communities (the top 15) will be reliant on hybrid fiber coax systems provided by Spectrum will be a weakness. Some of the most rural communities in the region will have fiber-to-the-home services which are the "gold standard" for broadband service and bringing that level of service to the economic centers of the region is a challenge.

Energy Costs: The region experiences some of the highest electricity costs in New England and in the nation. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, Massachusetts had the 4th highest average retail price for electricity in the nation in 2015. Massachusetts averaged 16.90 cents/kWh for electricity compared to a national average of 10.41 cents/kWh. High electricity costs are typically the result of various factors including high energy generation and transmission costs, users operating inefficient equipment, and the local distribution costs. These costs translate into reduced profits for businesses and transferred costs to customers. The electricity costs in the region have remained high despite the development of alternative energy pockets throughout the region. The high cost of electricity is a deterrent to businesses considering locating in the region and a burden to businesses currently located in the region. This is particularly true for manufacturers, who usually have high energy demands, and has been an important factor in the closing of most of the paper mills in the region.

Population Loss: The region's total population has been declining since 1970. Between 1970 and 2014 the region lost 20,687 people or 13.8% of the total population. As region's the total population declines the number of people available to participate in the workforce declines making it more difficult for employers to meet their workforce needs and serves as a deterrent to businesses considering locating in the region. Several of the region's major employers are reporting difficulty filling positions that require educated and skilled workers.

Outmigration of Young Adults: After high school, many young adults leave the region for college or to pursue work opportunities. This has created a scarcity of young, educated, and skilled workers in the region that would typically enter the workforce to replace retiring workers or as part of a business's expansion or growth. If businesses are unable to fill their workforce needs in the region the possibility exists that some businesses may elect to leave the region, further contributing to the population decline. The lack of young, educated, and skilled workers serves as a deterrent to businesses considering locating in the region. The relative lack of younger workers also leads to a decrease in school children. The steady decline in children in public schools in the region is leading to decreased breadth of educational opportunities in most, if not all, school districts in the county. With access to quality education being a key location factor for families with children, if an attractive breadth of education is not provided, there will be a significant disincentive for younger workers and their families to remain in or relocate to the county.

Aging Population: The number of older individuals as a percentage of the region's total population is increasing. The region has fewer adults between the ages of 20 to 40 and significantly fewer children. The rate of decrease of the 20- to 40-year-old age cohort is much higher in the region than elsewhere in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the United States. Many businesses are identifying the lack of younger workers, and the relatively old age of the existing workforce as a key concern. The Educational Services and Healthcare & Social Assistance sectors, both key sectors in the regional economy, are expected to encounter this issue in the next several years. However, a recent survey of older adults (BRPC, 2015) shows that many older individuals are choosing to continue working to later ages. This may represent an opportunity to employers to take advantage of an already skilled workforce.

Shortage of Skilled Workforce: Economic growth in the region is inhibited by a shortage of skilled workers. There are several reasons that account for this shortage; however, the "brain drain" due to the out migration of young adults and the decreased breadth of educational opportunities in the county are seen as two key factors.

Employers in the region report difficulties fulfilling their workforce needs due in part to the region's declining population, aging workforce and a scarcity of young educated and skilled workers. The current trends for these issues suggest that these difficulties will increase absent some type of intervention or change in the status quo.

Comparatively Low Average Annual Pay by Sector: For every industry sector, employees in the region received a lower average annual pay in 2014 compared to employees across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and in the United States, and in many cases the difference in annual average pay was significant. The low average annual pay may explain in part the difficulty that businesses in the region experience in terms of recruiting employees and in particular young adults. Younger adults are typically more mobile and have the ability to relocate to pursue the most attractive and lucrative employment opportunities. The low average annual pay also contributes in part to the region's low median household income.

In 2014, the region's median household income was \$49,737, which was lower than the two surrounding regions, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the United States.

High Employment in Low Wage Sectors: The industry sectors that employ the largest number of people in the region also pay some of the lowest average weekly wages. For example, the Accommodations and Food Services sector employs over 7,000 people and pays the lowest weekly wage of any industry sector of \$355. Similarly, the Retail Trade sector employs over 8,500 persons and pays the fourth lowest weekly wage of \$515. The region's high level of employment in lower wage jobs also contributes to the region's low median household income.

Limited Availability of Public Transportation: The Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA) provides public transportation services for the region. The BRTA bus schedule is limited and does not meet the needs of the region's workers, especially those workers with non-traditional work schedules (i.e. 2nd shift or 3rd shift workers). The lack of public transportation is an important issue because the sectors that employ the largest number of people, Healthcare & Social Assistance, Retail Trade, and Accommodations & Food Services, typically have employees that work non-traditional hours. Employees in those sectors are also more likely to avail themselves of the region's public transportation due to the low wages paid in two of these sectors. The limited public transportation available in the region may limit a person's ability to pursue better employment opportunities or educational opportunities making it more difficult for people to advance in their careers.

Limited Passenger Rail Service: The passenger rail service in the region is extremely limited. Amtrak operates a passenger rail service between Boston, MA and Albany, NY on the CSX New England Line; however, service is limited to two trains per day (one in each direction) at the Intermodal Center in Pittsfield, MA. The level of passenger rail service in the region is not conducive to daily use by commuters or for routine business trips to Boston, New York City, etc. Expansion of passenger rail would benefit both business travelers and the tourism industry and is noted as a potential opportunity below.

Limited Access to Interstate Highways within the Region: Despite its relative close proximity to major metropolitan areas, the most populous areas in the region (Pittsfield, North Adams) have poor access to the interstate highway system. This is particularly relevant for businesses that ship large amounts of freight and not as

relevant for tourism. The region has access to Interstate 90 (I-90) in Lee, MA and West Stockbridge, MA. The trip time from Pittsfield to I-90 is approximately twenty minutes and approximately one hour from North Adams to I-90. The region is at a significant disadvantage for interstate highway access compared to the Pioneer Valley and Capital Region which have access to multiple interstate highways and more land available for development.

Limited Availability of Land for Industrial or Commercial Development: The region has a limited amount of space to accommodate new major industrial or commercial development. A 2014 study by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, identified 66 sites consisting of 132 properties that are appropriately zoned for industrial or commercial development and served by public utilities (water/wastewater). Only 43 of the 132 properties identified exceeded three acres, identified in the report as the minimum size necessary for a new major industrial or commercial development. There are only 10 sites available exceeding 10 acres; of these, only three sites exceed 30 acres. There are no currently available sites in excess of 50 acres. The report also identified 48 developed properties that are currently unused or underutilized. The developed properties total over 2.6 million square feet of underutilized building space; however, much of this area is located in older mill buildings that do not meet the space requirements of most modern manufacturers. There are only three sites with more than 200,000 s.f., the largest being 243,704 s.f.. The lack of any site suitable for a manufacturer needing more than 250,000 s.f. of building space is a significant issue.

One potential site, the Berkshire Mall property, is approximately 86 acres and has approximately 650,000 s.f. of finished space. Although this site is not currently available, the Berkshire Mall, like many malls nationwide, has been struggling financially in recent years. Two of its anchor stores, Macy's and Best Buy, have closed, a third anchor, JC Penney, has announced its closure, and the remaining anchor store is Sears, which nationally has predicted store closures, although not specific to this location at this time. Should the mall property become available, it would be the largest development/redevelopment site in Berkshire County.

Opportunities

The region has a number of occasions for regional improvement or progress likely to occur in the near future that will help to advance the regional economy.

The Berkshire Innovation Center: The City of Pittsfield plans to construct a 24,000 square foot state-of-the art innovation center; ground breaking is scheduled for 3Q17. The Berkshire Innovation Center (BIC) facility will consist of wet labs, clean rooms, computer labs, conference facilities, research and development space and business incubator space. The equipment plan for the BIC facility includes state-of-the-art equipment for precision and analysis microscopy, design and reverse engineering, rapid prototyping 3D printing, precision measurement, automation, and robotics. The BIC facility will be available to all companies, educational institutions, and organizations on a membership basis. Advanced research and development facilities do not exist in the region and the cost to obtain such specialized equipment is too high for many of the small and medium sized companies located here. The BIC facility has the potential to significantly enhance the research and development capabilities of the region’s advanced manufacturing companies leading to the development of new products and enhanced production capabilities that in turn will lead to additional employment opportunities.

“Last Mile” Regional Fiber Optic Network: In 2014, the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) completed the installation of 1,200 miles of fiber optic cable and equipment to serve as the fiber optic backbone for 123 municipalities in western and north central Massachusetts (MassBroadband 123). The fiber optic network passes through every municipality in Berkshire County; however, access to the fiber optic network for private individuals and businesses is very limited. In terms of an analogy, the middle mile fiber optic network is a limited access highway passing through the region with few exit and entrance ramps and no local streets. The construction of the last-mile portion of the fiber optic network that will allow individuals and businesses to connect is critically important to the region. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts through MBI has allocated \$50 million towards the last-mile portion of the network and various towns have pledged an additional \$38 million. The completion of the “last mile” portion of the regional fiber optic network will address one of the region’s most significant competitive disadvantages and open the region to broadband dependent businesses. Unfortunately, the current last mile efforts do not create a fiber based system in the most economically important communities in the region, like Pittsfield and North Adams, but a working group has begun meeting to consider how to approach that problem.

The construction of the “last mile” portion of the regional fiber optic network is one of the most critical infrastructure projects planned for the region in the past several decades.

Enhanced Passenger Rail Service: The passenger rail service in the region is extremely limited. Amtrak operates a passenger rail service between Boston, MA and Albany, NY on the CSX New England Line; however, service is limited to two trains per day (one in each direction) at the Intermodal Center in Pittsfield, MA. The level of passenger rail service in the region is not conducive to daily use by commuters or for routine business trips to Boston, New York City, etc. The region would benefit from more frequent passenger rail service that would allow people to commute daily to Albany, NY, Springfield, MA, Worcester, MA, or Boston, MA without the need for an automobile. New York is studying true high speed rail service in the NYC-Albany-Buffalo corridor and establishing quality connection to that service would be a significant opportunity. The rail corridor is in place for this to happen along the CSX New England Line, however significant investment would be needed in the track and for related facilities. In addition to east/west passenger rail service, the Housatonic Railroad Company (HRC) has proposed the restoration of passenger rail service between Pittsfield, MA and New York City on the Berkshire Line southward through Connecticut. Connecting the region to the most populous city in the United States directly by train is an excellent opportunity for the region. Restoring the north/south passenger rail service along the Berkshire Line will require a significant financial investment to replace the nearly century old rails and ties. The passenger rail service also requires the commitment and support of the both the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the State of Connecticut, and possibly New York State.

Redevelopment of Existing Mills: Berkshire County's industrial past is simultaneously a blessing and a curse. The region's former mill buildings have excellent redevelopment potential as mixed use, commercial, or residential buildings. The mill buildings have less value as industrial properties because they do not meet the needs for most modern day manufacturers. Successful mill redevelopment has occurred in North Adams with the redevelopment of the Sprague Electric Complex into the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (Mass MOCA), the Rice Silk Mill in Pittsfield, and at Cable Mills in Williamstown. Current mill redevelopment projects are planned for the Eagle Mill in Lee, the Stationery Factory in Dalton, and the Greylock Mill in North Adams. However, one of the major difficulties in redeveloping a former mill is the presence of contamination most often attributable to the site's historic industrial uses. BRPC has an active brownfields redevelopment program, funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which supports needed assessment and clean up.



Figure 1. Mass MOCA - North Adams, MA

Entrepreneurial Development: The opportunity to develop a comprehensive entrepreneurial ecosystem exists in the region. Several organizations in the region provide valuable support to small business owners and prospective entrepreneurs. These organizations are particularly important because the region has a higher percentage of self-

employed workers than the surrounding regions, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the United States. Efforts underway in the region to improve the entrepreneurial ecosystem include increasing awareness of the available services, increasing networking opportunities, and enhancing the financial support for new and prospective small businesses.

Forestry Resources: A significant portion of land in the region (74.9%) is forested (Mass GIS Land Use, 2005). The Plan for Forest-Based Economic Development and Conservation developed by the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership⁴ takes an in-depth look at the potential for forest-based industries in northern Berkshire and Franklin Counties. The report discusses the steep decline in timber harvesting over the past nine years (a decrease of nearly 55%) and the steep decline in the wood product manufacturing and paper manufacturing industries in the 20-town study area. The nine towns in northern Berkshire County included in the study have over 44,000 acres of forest with an estimated timber value of \$148.6 million. The report identifies economic opportunities related to the sustainable harvesting of wood and wood processing as well as outdoor recreation based tourism

Value-Added Agriculture: As discussed in Strengths above, value added agriculture might be a means for farmers to capture a larger share of the consumer food dollar. Value-added agriculture is regarded by some as a significant rural development strategy. Small-scale, organic food processing, non-traditional crop production, agri-tourism, and bio-fuels development are examples of various value-added projects that have created new jobs in some rural places. Berkshire County is already making some of these efforts through farm stores, farm shares, and local farmers' markets. Local agricultural products are viewed with a sense of pride and seen as a market to be expanded.

Potential Development Sites: As discussed in Weaknesses above, Berkshire County is very limited in the number of potential development sites of any scale. However, recently, one potential site, the Berkshire Mall property, has been discussed for its potential. Should the mall property become available, at 86 acres, it would be the largest development/redevelopment site in Berkshire County.

⁴ The Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership includes the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, the Franklin Land Trust, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and representatives from 20 municipalities in northern Berkshire and Franklin County.

Threats

The region has some issues that if not addressed in the near future might negatively impact the regional economy.

Employment Decline in the Manufacturing Sector: Since the 1970s the region's Manufacturing sector has evolved from a several large companies, along with many small to medium sized firms, engaged in traditional manufacturing to one consisting of small to medium sized companies engaged in advanced manufacturing. Throughout this transition, the number of people employed in the Manufacturing sector has decreased significantly. Since 1970, the region has experienced a 76% decline in employment in the Manufacturing sector. Employment opportunities in the Manufacturing sector are being replaced by jobs in the Healthcare and Social Services, Retail Trade, Educational Services, and the Accommodation and Food Services sectors. In most instances, the diversification of a region's economy is a welcome development; however, when the jobs in the manufacturing sector are being replaced with jobs in sectors that pay lower wages the outcome is less than desirable. Even despite this steep decline in manufacturing employment, the Manufacturing sector still employs the fifth highest number of people in the region. If action is not taken to change the status quo for the region's Manufacturing sector it will continue to lose these higher wage jobs.

Increasing Municipal Costs: The cost of a municipality to provide essential services are increasing due in part to long term pension and retiree health insurance costs that are rising faster than revenues. The cost of public education is also a significant burden on municipal finances. To meet their obligations to provide these services municipalities are becoming more reliant on the local property tax. Rising local taxes along with a declining population is resulting in a situation where an individual is required to bear a larger proportion of the cost for the municipal services.

Aging Municipal Infrastructure: The age and condition of municipal infrastructure in the region is a threat to the finances of the municipalities and the regional economy. A significant number of the local roads and bridges in the region are in poor condition which leads to slower travel times and more wear and tear on vehicles resulting in increased costs to businesses and residents. The water and wastewater infrastructure that is essential to the operation of some of the region's businesses is nearing the end of its anticipated useful life and needs to be repaired or replaced. The cost to repair and replace such infrastructure is typically financed, at least in part by the municipalities, which as discussed above are already facing increased costs.

In 2012, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development projected a 6.5% decline in manufacturing employment for the region over the next ten years. The economic conditions worsened and the region experienced the predicted decline in only four years.

Above Average Number of Part-time Workers: The region has a higher percentage of part-time workers than the United States, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the surrounding regions. Part-time workers typically receive lower wages and are not provided the benefits associated with full-time employment, such as healthcare and retirement benefits. Thus, one might expect the region's median household income to remain lower than surrounding areas that have a lower percentage of part-time workers. The higher percentage of part-time workers may be attributable in part to the Retail Trade and Accommodations and Food Service sectors that employ a large number of people. The higher percentage of part-time workers might also indicate that workers are unable to find full-time employment and the regional economy has still not yet fully recovered from the Great Recession.

Additional threats include:

- High Energy Costs for Manufacturers
- Lack of Advanced Broadband availability in the Region's Economic Centers.
- Workforce Skills Gap – insufficient technology and trade education and training to meet the needs of local businesses requiring skilled labor.
- Decline in the Breadth of High School Education Available.
- Dearth of Younger Age (20-40-year-old) Work Force.
- Insufficiently Developed Economic Development and Entrepreneurial Development Ecosystem.

ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

The EDA recognizes that regional economic prosperity is linked to an area's ability to avoid, withstand, and quickly recover from economic shifts, natural disasters, the impact of climate change, and other potential major disruptions, sometimes referred to as shocks to its economic base. Many definitions of economic resilience limit its focus on the ability to quickly recover from a disruption. However, in the context of economic development, economic resilience becomes inclusive of three primary attributes:

- The ability to recover quickly from a shock;
- The ability to withstand a shock; and
- The ability to avoid the shock altogether.

Establishing economic resilience in a local or regional economy requires the ability to anticipate risk, evaluate how that risk can impact key economic assets, and build a responsive capacity. Often, the shocks/disruptions to the economic base of an area or region are manifested in three ways:

- Downturns or other significant events in the national or international economy which impact demand for locally produced goods and consumer spending;
- Downturns in particular industries that constitute a critical component of the region's economic activity; and/or
- Other external shocks (a natural or man-made disaster, closure of a military base, exit of a major employer, the impacts of climate change, etc.).

The CEDS provides a critical mechanism to help identify regional vulnerabilities and prevent and/or respond to economic disruptions. Therefore, embracing economic resilience is a key component of this document.

Integrating resilience into the CEDS has been undertaken as part of a two-pronged approach:

1. Planning for and implementing resilience through specific goals or actions to bolster the long-term economic durability of the region (steady-state), and
2. Establishing information networks among the various stakeholders in the region to encourage active and regular communications between the public, private, education, and non-profit sectors to collaborate on existing and potential future challenges (responsive).

In building economic resilience, it is critical that economic development organizations consider their role in the pre- and post-incident environment to include steady-state and responsive initiatives. Steady-state initiatives tend to be long-term efforts that seek to bolster the community or region's ability to withstand or

avoid a shock. Responsive initiatives can include establishing capabilities for the economic development organization to be responsive to the region's recovery needs following an incident.

Steady-State Economic Resilience:

Examples of steady-state economic resilience initiatives include:

- Engaging in comprehensive planning efforts that involve extensive involvement from the community to define and implement a collective vision for resilience that includes the integration and/or alignment of other planning efforts (e.g., hazard mitigation plans) and funding sources;
- Undertaking efforts to broaden the industrial base with diversification initiatives, such as targeting the development of emerging clusters or industries that (a) build on the region's unique assets and competitive strengths; and (b) provide stability during downturns that disproportionately impact any single cluster or industry;
- Adapting business retention and expansion programs to assist firms with economic recovery post-disruption;
- Building a resilient workforce that can better shift between jobs or industries when their core employment is threatened through job-driven skills strategies and support organizations;
- Maintaining geographic information systems (GIS) that link with municipal business licenses, tax information, and other business establishment data bases to track local and regional "churn" and available development sites. GIS can also be integrated with hazard information to make rapid post-incident impact assessments;
- Ensuring redundancy in telecommunications and broadband networks to protect commerce and public safety in the event of natural or manmade disasters;
- Promoting business continuity and preparedness (i.e., ensuring businesses understand their vulnerabilities—including supply chains—in the face of disruptions and are prepared to take actions to resume operations after an event); and
- Employing safe development practices in business districts and surrounding communities. Strategies may include locating structures outside of floodplains, preserving natural lands that act as buffers from storms, and protecting downtowns and other existing development from the impacts of extreme weather.

Responsive Economic Resilience:

Some examples of responsive economic resilience initiatives include:

- Conducting pre-disaster recovery planning to define key stakeholders, roles, responsibilities, and key actions;
- Establishing a process for regular communication, monitoring, and updating of business continuity needs and issues (which can then be used after an incident);
- Establishing/using a capability to rapidly contact key local, regional, state, and federal officials to communicate business sector needs and coordinate impact assessment efforts; and
- Establishing/using coordination mechanisms and leadership succession plans for short, intermediate, and long-term recovery needs.

Fortunately, there is an active and robust emergency preparedness community operating in the region, led by the Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council (WRHSAC). The WRHSAC has implemented an impressive range of projects and initiatives for planning and preparedness for emergencies and to support first responders and emergency personnel. This work has required tremendous outreach and the creation of informational materials, including the WesternMassReady.org website. Currently, efforts are underway to better engage the business community to be prepared and participate in this system of emergency management.

Considerable work has been done to assess and mitigate hazard risks at the municipal and regional level, such as through town hazard mitigation plans and the work of WRHSAC and BRPC's Emergency Preparedness Program. Possible disasters that could impact this area include flooding, severe winter weather, extreme heat, power outages, terrorism, earthquakes, emerging disease and pandemics, hazardous materials, forest fires, and tornadoes and high winds. Experience from the devastating flooding of Tropical Storm Irene in 2011 provided additional insight into what could be done to improve response and recovery. As a result of this work, action steps and resources have been prepared to effectively protect the health and safety of residents, emergency personnel, and others in case of any of these events.

In addition to specific risks, the EDA recommends economic development planners evaluate their region's resilience by measuring how evenly income is distributed across the population and the degree to which economic activity is spread across sectors. The premise is that a diversified economy will better withstand economic shocks.

The University of California Berkeley's Institute of Governmental Studies has an online tool called the Resilience Capacity Index (RCI) which summarizes a region's status based on multiple factors that "influence the ability of a region to bounce back from a future unknown stress." This Index takes into consideration how a region's income is distributed and the diversity of economic activity, among other

factors. The Index score indicates how well a metropolitan area might respond to a future stress. A ranking of VERY HIGH or HIGH indicates a higher capacity of being resilient, and that “the region has factors and conditions thought to position a region well for effective post-stress resilience performance”, according to the Building Resilient Regions website. A ranking of VERY LOW or LOW indicates “the region lacks factors and conditions thought to position a region well for effective post-stress resilience performance.”

The RCI is a single statistic summarizing a region’s score on 12 equally weighted indicators – four indicators in each of three dimensions encompassing Regional Economic, Socio-Demographic, and Community Connectivity attributes. See chart below. As a gauge of a region’s foundation for responding effectively to a future stress, the RCI reveals regional strengths and weaknesses, and allows regional leaders to compare their region’s capacity profile to that of other metropolitan areas. The RCI score is available for 361 metropolitan areas across the United States.

Resilience Capacity Index (RCI)		
Regional Economic Capacity	Socio-Demographic Capacity	Community Connectivity Capacity
• <i>Income Equality</i>	• <i>Educational Attainment</i>	• <i>Civic Infrastructure</i>
• <i>Economic Diversification</i>	• <i>Without Disability</i>	• <i>Metropolitan Stability</i>
• <i>Regional Affordability</i>	• <i>Out of Poverty</i>	• <i>Homeownership</i>
• <i>Business Environment</i>	• <i>Health-Insured</i>	• <i>Voter Participation</i>

Source: Building Resilient Regions, Institute of Government Studies, the University of California Berkeley

To continue with the comparison of Berkshire County, the New York Capital District, and the Massachusetts Pioneer Valley used throughout the CEDS; RCI scores are shown in the table below for Pittsfield, MA, Albany, NY, and Springfield, MA.

Regional Comparison of RCI Scores				
Region		Pittsfield	Albany	Springfield
Overall RCI	Z-Score	0.36	0.50	0.15
	Rank	83	48	152
Regional Economic Capacity	Z-Score	-0.25	0.05	0.01
	Rank	269	182	188
Socio-Demographic Capacity	Z-Score	0.45	0.96	0.32
	Rank	94	38	113
Community Connectivity Capacity	Z-Score	0.89	0.50	0.12
	Rank	23	74	175

Source: Building Resilient Regions, Institute of Government Studies, the University of California Berkeley

Pittsfield has an overall RCI that falls in between Albany and Springfield; however, it ranks poorly by comparison in Regional Economic Capacity, and is the only one of the three communities that falls below the mean (negative z-score). Pittsfield's overall score is buoyed by its very strong score in Community Connectivity Capacity. All scores are ranked from 1 to 361, and while scoring is a valid indicator, according to the Institute of Government Studies a high score does not guarantee resiliency in the event of an economic disaster, and conversely, a low score does not mean a region cannot withstand an economic downturn and recover to a robust economy.

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

Vision

The foundation of the 2016 Berkshire CEDS is the Vision Statement. The 2016 CEDS Vision Statement is:

“To create a diverse and robust economy that creates sustainable prosperity for all its residents. While capitalizing on the region’s heritage, intellectual vigor, cultural assets, agricultural and natural resources we will encourage innovation, collaboration and entrepreneurial spirit.”

Goals & Objectives

Goal # 1: Talent & Workforce

To stabilize and strengthen the region’s workforce in order to meet the evolving needs of the employers in the region.

- Align public education offerings to meet the need of employers in the region.
- Align adult workforce training programs to meet the needs of employers in the region.
- Identify and address workforce issues associated with the region’s aging population.
- Increase the percentage of young adults in the region’s workforce.
- Increase employment in sectors that pay higher wages.
- Increase access in high schools and through higher education to technical training needed for available technical jobs not requiring a bachelor’s degree.

Goal # 2: Entrepreneurship & Innovation

To create a diverse and robust business and entrepreneurial environment that encourages innovation and drives economic growth and opportunity.

- Ensure access to capital for all phases of business development.
- Provide direct support and training to small businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Increase awareness of available resources for business owners and entrepreneurs.
- Create a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Promote innovation and research and development at the region’s manufacturing companies.

- Support the development of business incubators and co-working and maker spaces.

Goal # 3: Infrastructure, Site Readiness & Transportation

To invest in infrastructure and site improvements that support or facilitate economic growth in appropriate areas.

- Invest in a regional fiber optic network that connects businesses and homes throughout the region.
- Invest in water/wastewater infrastructure in areas appropriate for economic development.
- Invest in the region's transportation network.
- Invest in the region's public transportation system.
- Support the remediation of brownfield sites.
- Support site readiness activities.
- Support investments in the region's power grid and in renewable energy generation.

Goal # 4: Collaboration

To increase regional and inter-regional collaboration to better leverage economic development opportunities.

- Strengthen and expand the collaboration between community and regional leaders on regional economic development projects.
- Expand the capacity of the region's economic development organizations.
- Pursue economic development opportunities with neighboring regions.
- Pursue forestry based economic development opportunities with Franklin County.

Goal # 5: Industry & Occupational Clusters

To support and expand the region's industry and occupational clusters

- Protect and leverage the region's natural resources, historic sites, and cultural assets.
- Support the region's educational institutions and educational workers.
- Support the region's health care and medical science industries and health care workers.
- Support the region's skilled production workers.
- Support the region's advanced manufacturers, particularly the specialty materials cluster.

Goal # 6: Economic Resiliency

To support the resiliency of individual business and the regional economy during future economic disruptions.

- Strengthen and diversify the regional and local economy.
- Provide assistance to businesses to persevere through times of economic disruption.
- Develop regional strategies to respond to future economic disruptions.

Action Plan

Goal # 1 - To stabilize and strengthen the region's workforce in order to meet the evolving needs of the employers in the region.

Action	Responsible Entity	Est. Cost	Funding Sources	Timeframe
1. Assess the regional labor market on a regular basis to identify workforce needs and shortages	Primary: BCREB Secondary: Berkshire Compact, 1Berkshire	\$20,000	Federal grants, corporate sponsorships, local funds, membership contributions	Annually
2. Hold workforce trainings to meet workforce needs	Primary: BCREB Secondary: Technical High Schools, BCC, MCLA	\$1,000,000 (annually)	Federal grants, corporate sponsorships, local funds, membership contributions	Ongoing
3. Connect students with internships and career exploration opportunities with local businesses	Primary: BCREB Secondary: 1Berkshire, BCC, Technical High Schools	\$300,000 (annually)	Federal grants, corporate sponsorships, local funds, membership contributions	Ongoing
4. Increase education in the STEM disciplines	Berkshire Compact	\$2,500,000 (annually)	Federal and state grants, private and public local funds	Ongoing
5. Recruit young adults to fill work opportunities in the region	Berkshire Works, 1Berkshire, employers	\$25,000	Federal and state grants, private and public local funds	Ongoing
6. Encourage companies to offer competitive wages to attract employees	1Berkshire	\$25,000 (annually)	Corporate sponsorships, member dues, state grants	Ongoing
7. Provide assistance and training to part-time workers searching for full-time employment	Berkshire Works, Technical High Schools, BCC	\$300,000 (annually)	Federal grants, corporate sponsorships, local funds, membership contributions	Ongoing

Goal # 2 - To create a diverse and robust business and entrepreneurial environment that encourages innovation and drives economic growth and opportunity.

Action	Responsible Entity	Est. Cost	Funding Sources	Timeframe
1. Provide a comprehensive range of business development assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs	Primary: 1Berkshire Secondary: Mass SBDC, Berkshire Enterprises, Franklin CDC, PERC	\$500,000 (annually)	Corporate sponsorships, member dues, state grants, Regional Economic Development funds	Ongoing
2. Provide a comprehensive range of traditional and non-traditional financial resources for small businesses and entrepreneurs	Primary: PERC/1Berkshire Secondary: local financial institutions, Franklin CDC, and others	\$1,500,000	Corporate sponsorships, state grants, EDA Revolving Loan Program, USDA Rural Development Revolving Loan Program	Ongoing

3. Maintain an online collection of resources for small businesses and entrepreneurs	1Berkshire	\$25,000	Corporate sponsorships, member dues, state grants, Regional Economic Development funds	Ongoing
4. Create an entrepreneurial culture in the region through networking, social media and events.	1Berkshire	\$100,000	Corporate sponsorships, member dues, state grants, Regional Economic Development funds	Ongoing
5. Establish business incubators and co-working spaces for businesses to grow	Private Developers	\$250,000 (annually)	Private equity, state and federal grants and loans	Ongoing
6. Establish a high tech innovation center to increase the research and development capabilities of companies and educational institutions	Berkshire Innovation Center	\$12,700,000	MA Life Sciences Center, local corporate sponsors, EDA Public Works, MassDevelopment, other federal and state grants	Ongoing

Goal # 3 - To invest in infrastructure and site improvements that support or facilitate economic growth in appropriate areas.

Action	Responsible Entity	Est. Cost	Funding Sources	Timeframe
1. Complete the last-mile portion of the MassBroadband 123 network to connect businesses and residences throughout the region	Primary: MBI Secondary: Wired West, individual towns	\$45,000,000	Local funds, Massachusetts last-mile broadband grants, other state and federal grants and loans	Ongoing
2. Replace aging municipal water and wastewater infrastructure to support economic development in appropriate areas	Individual cities and towns, and private water companies	\$250,000,000	EDA Public Works, USDA Rural Development grants and loans, EPA, MassDevelopment, State Revolving Loan Fund, other federal, state and local funds	Ongoing
3. Make improvements to the region's transportation network (roads, bridges, rail) to support economic development	Primary: BRPC/MPO coordination Secondary: MassDOT, individual municipalities	Highway and Bridge \$1,003,891,481 Public Transportation \$207,846,824	Federal highway and transportation programs, Massachusetts DOT, local assessments, fare box	Ongoing
4. Pursue better rail connections to the Boston and New York City metropolitan areas	Primary: BRPC/MPO coordinate/advocate Secondary: MassDOT, Amtrak,	Planning and Development \$2,500,000 Construction – TBD	Federal highway and transportation programs, Massachusetts DOT, Connecticut DOT, New York DOT, EDA Public	Ongoing

Goal # 3 - To invest in infrastructure and site improvements that support or facilitate economic growth in appropriate areas.

5. Undertake on-site and off-site improvements to ensure that commercial/industrial sites are ready for development	HRR Company, CTDOT, NYDOT Primary: Municipalities Secondary: BRPC, 1Berkshire, Lee CDC, PED A	\$15,000,000	Works, other state and federal grants EDA Public Works, USDA Rural Development grants and loans, EPA, MassDevelopment, other federal, state and local funds	Ongoing
6. Evaluate and assess the best opportunities for reuse of vacant or underutilized sites	Primary: Municipalities Secondary: BRPC, 1Berkshire, Lee CDC, PED A	\$50,000 (annually)	EDA Planning Grants, EPA Brownfield grants, other federal, state and local funds	Ongoing
7. Provide funding for the assessment of suspected brownfield sites in the region	Primary: BRPC Secondary: EPA, MassDevelopment, EOHED, municipalities, Lee CDC	\$1,000,000 (annually)	EPA Brownfield Assessment grants, MassDevelopment Brownfields program, MA DLTA, other state and local funds	Annually
8. Advocate for an increase in transportation funding provided by the Commonwealth	Primary: BRPC/MPO, BRTA	\$20,000	Federal and state public transportation funds	Ongoing
9. Advocate for changes in the public transportation schedule to accommodate the needs of workers	Primary: BRTA Secondary: Berkshire MPO, 1Berkshire, Berkshire Works, BCAC	\$20,000	Federal and state public transportation funds	Ongoing
10. Undertake improvements to the region's electric distribution system to accommodate increased distributed generation	Primary: investor owned electric companies Secondary: MassDOER, DPU	\$25,000,000	Private equity, other state and federal funds	Ongoing

Goal # 4 - To increase regional and inter-regional collaboration to better leverage economic development opportunities.

Action	Responsible Entity	Est. Cost	Funding Sources	Timeframe
1. Increase communication and coordination on economic development activities between the public and private sectors	Primary: 1Berkshire Secondary: BRPC, municipalities, CDCs	\$50,000	Corporate sponsorships, member dues, state grants	Ongoing
2. Increase the capacity of the region's economic development organizations to undertake economic development activities	Primary: 1Berkshire Secondary: BRPC, PERC, Lee CDC, PED A, municipalities	\$100,000	Corporate sponsorships, member dues, state grants	Ongoing

3. Pursue an Economic Development District designation for the region from the U.S. Economic Development Administration	Primary: BRPC Secondary: municipalities	\$10,000	EDA Planning Grant, Mass DLTA	TBD
4. Increase communication and coordinate with neighboring regional organizations and governments on economic development activities	Primary: BRPC & 1Berkshire Secondary: municipalities	\$10,000	EDA Planning Grant, DLTA, corporate sponsorships, member dues, state grants	Ongoing

Goal # 5 - To support and expand the region's industry and occupational clusters

Action	Responsible Entity	Est. Cost	Funding Sources	Timeframe
1. Hold workforce trainings relevant to multiple companies in an industry cluster	Primary: Berkshire Works Secondary: Berkshire Compact, BCREB, 1Berkshire	\$100,000	Corporate sponsorships, member dues, state grants	Ongoing
2. Promote the region's industry clusters (tourism, education, health care, advanced manufacturing)	1Berkshire	\$100,000	Corporate sponsorships, member dues, state grants	Ongoing
3. Promote the coordination and collaboration between companies in the same industry cluster	1Berkshire	\$25,000	Corporate sponsorships, member dues, state grants	Ongoing

Goal # 6 - To support the resiliency of individual business and the regional economy during future economic disruptions.

Action	Responsible Entity	Est. Cost	Funding Sources	Timeframe
1. Develop measures of economic resiliency and assess the region's resiliency on a regular basis	BRPC	\$25,000 (annually)	EDA Planning Grant, DLTA, other state and federal funding sources	Annually
2. Provide direct training to businesses on how to persevere through natural disasters and economic downturns	Primary: 1Berkshire Secondary: BRPC	\$7,500	Corporate sponsorships, member dues, state grants	Ongoing
3. Engage the private sector in natural hazard mitigation planning	BRPC	\$7,500	EDA Planning Grant, DLTA, other state and federal funding sources	Ongoing
4. Engage the private sector in the development of disaster response and recovery plans	Primary: 1Berkshire Secondary: BRPC	\$7,500	Corporate sponsorships, member dues, state grants	Ongoing

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

To move the Berkshire economy forward and to facilitate the ongoing economic planning process, the Berkshire CEDS has been completely rewritten for 2017, including the performance measures. The CEDS is required to be re-written every five-years; however, status reports are produced annually. The status reports help to verify the implementation of the CEDS, assess its overall effectiveness and provide a basis for periodic updates where needed. The reports are a way to proactively address the region's changing economy to make the CEDS an evolving (or living) document.

As part of the status reports, developed by BRPC, the CEDS Strategy Committee will examine the implementation progress of the 2017 Berkshire CEDS report. Performance measures will be used to ascertain the effectiveness of The Action Plan for Economic Prosperity chapter, specifically the progress towards achieving the region's goals, objectives, and priority projects. To support this examination, current characteristic data from federal, state, and other sources will be utilized to assist the assessment where appropriate. The CEDS Strategy Committee, through this process, will also be able to identify supplemental steps that are needed to address both local and regional economic changes and challenges.

The performance measures to be used include:

1. Change in total employment for the region
2. Change in median household income and median family income for the region
3. Change in number of young adults in the labor force
4. Change in per capita income
5. Identify investments in the region, including amount, public or private and industry sector
6. Identify investments in the region's transportation network
7. Identify investments in municipal infrastructure that support economic development
8. Number of active business incubators, co-working spaces, and maker spaces in the region
9. Number of households with access to fiber optic cable
10. Identify instances of regional collaboration on economic development activities
11. Number of workforce trainings held in identified industry or occupational clusters
12. Brief assessment of the region's economic resilience

Goal/Action Item	Performance Measures
Goal # 1 - To stabilize and strengthen the region's workforce in order to meet the evolving needs of the employers in the region.	
1. Assess the regional labor market on a regular basis to identify workforce needs and shortages	Brief assessment of the region's economic resilience
2. Hold workforce trainings to meet workforce needs	Number of workforce trainings held in identified industry or occupational clusters
3. Connect students with internships and career exploration opportunities with local businesses	Change in number of young adults in the labor force
4. Increase education in the STEM disciplines	Change in number of young adults in the labor force
5. Recruit young adults to fill work opportunities in the region	Change in number of young adults in the labor force
6. Encourage companies to offer competitive wages to attract employees	Change in total employment for the region Change in median household income and median family income for the region Change in per capita income
7. Provide assistance and training to part-time workers searching for full-time employment	Number of workforce trainings held in identified industry or occupational clusters
Goal # 2 - To create a diverse and robust business and entrepreneurial environment that encourages innovation and drives economic growth and opportunity.	
1. Provide a comprehensive range of business development assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs	Identify investments in the region, including amount, public or private and industry sector Number of active business incubators, co-working spaces, and maker spaces in the region
2. Provide a comprehensive range of traditional and non-traditional financial resources for small businesses and entrepreneurs	Identify investments in the region, including amount, public or private and industry sector Identify instances of regional collaboration on economic development activities
3. Maintain an online collection of resources for small businesses and entrepreneurs	Identify investments in the region, including amount, public or private and industry sector Identify instances of regional collaboration on economic development activities
4. Create an entrepreneurial culture in the region through networking, social media and events.	Identify instances of regional collaboration on economic development activities
5. Establish business incubators and co-working spaces for businesses to grow	Number of active business incubators, co-working spaces, and maker spaces in the region

<p>6. Establish a high tech innovation center to increase the research and development capabilities of companies and educational institutions</p>	<p>Identify investments in the region, including amount, public or private and industry sector</p> <p>Identify investments in municipal infrastructure that support economic development</p> <p>Identify instances of regional collaboration on economic development activities</p>
<p>Goal # 3 - To invest in infrastructure and site improvements that support or facilitate economic growth in appropriate areas.</p>	
<p>1. Complete the last-mile portion of the MassBroadband 123 network to connect businesses and residences throughout the region</p>	<p>Number of households with access to fiber optic cable</p>
<p>2. Replace aging municipal water and wastewater infrastructure to support economic development in appropriate areas</p>	<p>Identify investments in municipal infrastructure that support economic development</p>
<p>3. Make improvements to the region's transportation network (roads, bridges, rail) to support economic development</p>	<p>Identify investments in the region's transportation network</p>
<p>4. Pursue better rail connections to the Boston and New York City metropolitan areas</p>	<p>Identify investments in the region, including amount, public or private and industry sector</p> <p>Identify investments in the region's transportation network</p> <p>Identify investments in municipal infrastructure that support economic development</p>
<p>5. Undertake on-site and off-site improvements to ensure that commercial/industrial sites are ready for development</p>	<p>Identify investments in the region, including amount, public or private and industry sector</p> <p>Identify investments in municipal infrastructure that support economic development</p> <p>Identify instances of regional collaboration on economic development activities</p>
<p>6. Evaluate and assess the best opportunities for reuse of vacant or underutilized sites</p>	<p>Identify investments in the region, including amount, public or private and industry sector</p> <p>Identify investments in municipal infrastructure that support economic development</p> <p>Identify instances of regional collaboration on economic development activities</p>
<p>7. Provide funding for the assessment of suspected brownfield sites in the region</p>	<p>Identify investments in the region, including amount, public or private and industry sector</p> <p>Identify instances of regional collaboration on economic development activities</p>

8. Advocate for an increase in transportation funding provided by the Commonwealth	Identify investments in the region's transportation network Identify instances of regional collaboration on economic development activities
9. Advocate for changes in the public transportation schedule to accommodate the needs of workers	Identify investments in the region's transportation network Identify instances of regional collaboration on economic development activities
10. Undertake improvements to the region's electric distribution system to accommodate increased distributed generation	Identify investments in municipal infrastructure that support economic development
Goal # 4 - To increase regional and inter-regional collaboration to better leverage economic development opportunities.	
1. Increase communication and coordination on economic development activities between the public and private sectors	Identify investments in the region, including amount, public or private and industry sector Identify instances of regional collaboration on economic development activities
2. Increase the capacity of the region's economic development organizations to undertake economic development activities	Identify investments in the region, including amount, public or private and industry sector Identify instances of regional collaboration on economic development activities
3. Pursue an Economic Development District designation for the region from the U.S. Economic Development Administration	Identify instances of regional collaboration on economic development activities
4. Increase communication and coordinate with neighboring regional organizations and governments on economic development activities	Identify instances of regional collaboration on economic development activities
Goal # 5 - To support and expand the region's industry and occupational clusters	
1. Hold workforce trainings relevant to multiple companies in an industry cluster	Number of workforce trainings held in identified industry or occupational clusters
2. Promote the region's industry clusters (tourism, education, health care, advanced manufacturing)	Identify instances of regional collaboration on economic development activities
3. Promote the coordination and collaboration between companies in the same industry cluster	Identify instances of regional collaboration on economic development activities

Goal # 6 - To support the resiliency of individual business and the regional economy during future economic disruptions.	
1. Develop measures of economic resiliency and assess the region's resiliency on a regular basis	Brief assessment of the region's economic resilience Identify instances of regional collaboration on economic development activities
2. Provide direct training to businesses on how to persevere through natural disasters and economic downturns	Brief assessment of the region's economic resilience Identify instances of regional collaboration on economic development activities
3. Engage the private sector in natural hazard mitigation planning	Brief assessment of the region's economic resilience Identify instances of regional collaboration on economic development activities
4. Engage the private sector in the development of disaster response and recovery plans	Brief assessment of the region's economic resilience Identify instances of regional collaboration on economic development activities

PRIORITY PROJECTS

Recognizing there are a number of ways specific projects could be viewed regarding regional significance, the prioritized projects were first grouped on a region wide basis and then by categories of economic impact (i.e. Physical Development (by sub-region), Physical and Technology Infrastructure, Programs and Initiatives, and Education and Workforce Development).

Projects Representing the Greatest Needs Regionally

- Broadband for All
- Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Brownfields Program
- Connecting Activities High School Internship Program
- Berkshire Compact for Education & Berkshire County STEM Pipeline Network
- Keep Berkshires Farming
- Targeting Procurement Dollars to Strengthen the Regional Food Economy
- Berkshire Innovation Center at William Stanley Business Park

Projects that Enhance the Region: Physical Development

North Sub-Region

- Development of the Greylock Glen Outdoor Recreation & Environmental Center (Adams)
- Greylock Mill Redevelopment (North Adams)
- Memorial School Redevelopment Project (Adams)

Central Sub-Region

- Berkshire Mall Reuse (Lanesborough)
- Crane Stationery Mill Redevelopment (Dalton)

South Sub-Region

- Redevelopment of the Historic Great Barrington Fairgrounds (Great Barrington)
- Monument Mills Area Reuse Planning (Housatonic Village (Great Barrington))
- Housatonic School Redevelopment (Housatonic Village (Great Barrington))
- New England Log Homes (Great Barrington)
- River School Redevelopment Project (Great Barrington)
- Adaptive Reuse of Mills - Niagara Mill (Lee)
- Miraval-Lenox Expansion at Cranwell (Lenox)

- Eastover (Lenox)
- Spring Lawn (Lenox)
- Elm Court – Front Yard/Travaasa (Stockbridge/Lenox)
- Tanglewood Expansion (Stockbridge/ Lenox)

Projects that Enhance the Region: Programs, Initiatives, Studies, Education, or Other

- Adaptive Reuse of Mills
- Adaptive reuse of “Great Estate” properties
- Berkshire Creative Initiatives
- Berkshire Hills Internship Program

The following project narratives were developed to outline basic information for each project proposal (i.e. name, location, funding source(s), job information, related linkages and timeframe).

Projects Representing the Greatest Needs Regionally

Project Name: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Brownfields Program

Project Location: Regional

Status: Implementation ongoing.

Project Summary: The BRPC Brownfields Program is a two-part assessment program and revolving loan fund used to provide municipalities and developers with the resources to assess and cleanup brownfields sites. Through its assessment program, BRPC hires a licensed site professional to investigate potential contamination on sites. The revolving loan fund program provides loans (and sub-grants) to municipalities and other entities to help pay for the actual physical removal of the contamination from the site. The purpose of this program is to promote the reuse and redevelopment of contaminated, vacant, or underutilized properties.

Funding Source(s): U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Brownfields Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, and Cleanup grants/loans.

Projected Job Creation: The number of jobs to be created or retained is unknown at this time. Once these sites have been cleaned up, they can be put into productive use within the communities.

Related Linkages: Through this project's development there are many linkages that have and will be developed including:

- Once brownfields sites are assessed and cleaned-up, they can be built upon or adaptively reused, such as in the cases of the New England Log Homes Site and the Greylock (Cariddi) Mill.
-

Timeframe: The program is ongoing, so long as grants applications are successful.

Project Name: Connecting Activities High School Internship Program

Location: Regional

Status: Implementation ongoing.

Project Summary: This program, operated by the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board (BCREB), provides a mechanism to develop career pathways and implement readiness workshops for individuals entering the workforce. It also places students in internships and training programs to assist them in competing in post-secondary education and employment opportunities. *Connecting Activities* is a structured work and learning program which annually connects 500 high school students with internships, provides 1,500 students with career exploration activities, and 15 educators with Teacher Externships. Approximately 30% of the student interns are paid, contributing to regional income.

Funding Source(s): Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Connecting Activities funding, Berkshire United Way funding, Berkshire County employer paid wages to youth in internships/structured work experiences, and in-kind contributions provided by Berkshire business community participating in career readiness activities/programs.

Projected Job Creation: 450 short-term internships annually

Related Linkages: This initiative supports education and workforce development.

Timeframe: This program is fully operational and ongoing annually.

Project Name: Berkshire Compact for Education & Berkshire County STEM Pipeline Network

Location: Regional

Status: Implementation ongoing.

Project Summary: This initiative works to improve access to post-secondary education and raise the aspirations of all Berkshire County residents to pursue 16 or more years of education and/or training in a technical field. The program also strives to build connections between the needs of the workplace and the local education system by providing students with knowledge about career options. Through the *Berkshire County Goes to College* program 1,200 sixth grade students and 450 third grade students from around the county visited either MCLA, BCC, Williams College, or Bard at Simon's Rock to learn about college life. In addition, 900 eighth grade students participated in MCLA's Career Fair, and a Youth Leadership Program was implemented for 30 high school juniors. Through the STEM Pipeline, approximately 300 high school students attended a STEM Career Fair at Berkshire Community College; 124 students participated in the Region I Middle School Science Fair at MCLA; 93 students participated in the Region I High School Science Fair at MCLA; and 48 high school and college students learned about STEM education and careers at two summer STEM Academies.

Funding Source(s): Berkshire United Way, Guardian Life, and MCLA Foundation.

Projected Job Creation: N/A

Related Linkages: These initiatives and programs seek to ready the workforce for Berkshire County in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. They also seek to create interest in these fields at a young age.

Timeframe: This program is fully operational and ongoing annually.

Project Name: Keep Berkshires Farming

Location: Regional

Status: Implementation ongoing.

Project Summary: The purpose of Keep Berkshires Farming is to increase the amount of food that is both produced and consumed in the county by overcoming potential barriers to market such as a lack of aggregation and distribution, value-added processing, meat processing and marketing. These and other economic factors can render small scale farming commercially unviable. The project will collect original data concerning local food supply and demand; formulate a strategy to strengthen local agricultural production and food access; then implement that strategy. Partners in this effort include the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Glynwood Center, Berkshire Grown, Berkshire County Farm Bureau, Food Bank of Western Massachusetts. (For additional information, see p. 30 of the 2013 Berkshire CEDS Annual Report).

Funding Source(s): Not provided.

Projected Job Creation: N/A

Related Linkages: Supporting local food production helps to foster long term ecological sustainability.

Timeframe: Ongoing

Project Name: Targeting Procurement Dollars to Strengthen the Regional Food Economy

Location: Regional

Status: Updated May 2017

Project Summary: This project provides technical assistance and training to actively link large-scale food purchasers with regional food producers. Beginning in 2014 major anchor institutions in the Berkshire region have shared with LEVER detailed data that describes their procurement expenditures including food. LEVER has analyzed the data that has led to a clear and specific picture of food purchasing patterns by the region's major buyers. This project combines the FCCDC's experience in helping food producers access markets with Lever's experience helping procurement agents at regional anchor institutions increase local purchasing. Activities include meet ups between producers and procurement agents, workshops for food producers that will prepare them to supply large wholesale buyers, curated introductions between specific food producers and selected procurement agents and the opportunity to provide marketing, sales, and distribution services to regional food producers on a commission basis. Estimated project cost is \$300,000 over 24-36 months until the project becomes self-sustaining.

Funding Source(s): EDA and local match

Projected Job Creation: Import replacement strategies replace imported food and ingredients with local regional ingredients. This project estimates that by shifting purchases locally, every \$100,000 spent locally creates or retains 1-2 jobs.

Related Linkages: Strategy: Accelerate business development and sustainability through direct support. Under this strategy are the following tasks:

- A. Ensure access to business development assistance and entrepreneurial training, and promote the availability of these resources. Provide access to purchasing decision makers who will inform the technical assistance providers.
 - B. Ensure access to non-traditional, gap commercial and equity financing capitalization for small businesses and entrepreneurs.
 - C. Coordinate opportunities for area businesses to learn about how to sell goods or services to governments and large institutions.
 - D. Develop programming to help with business succession planning.
 - E. Explore what goods and services are sourced from outside the region that could be provided from within the region.
 - F. To enhance value added agricultural businesses. Expand use of the Western Mass. Food Processing Center and encourage greater institutional buying of local food products.
-

Timeframe: Ongoing

Project Name: Berkshire Innovation Center at William Stanley Business Park

Location: City of Pittsfield

Status: Implementation ongoing; groundbreaking scheduled for 3Q17.

Project Summary: This project will construct and create the Berkshire Innovation Center (formerly called “Life Science Center”) enable innovation and accelerate growth for manufacturing companies in the Berkshire Region including Life Sciences, the Life Sciences Supply Chain, Advanced Manufacturing, and Technology. The BIC facility will provide BIC member companies and partners with a cutting edge R&D laboratory, training center, and collaboration / conference center all rolled into one. This state-of-the-art 20,000 square foot facility will contain R&D equipment space, conferencing facilities, accelerator and incubator space, biotech wet lab space. clean rooms, PC lab and server room, and training classrooms.

Funding Source(s): Massachusetts Life Science Center

Projected Job Creation: It is estimated that the development of this center would generate 25 fulltime positions.

Related Linkages: Since this project may be developed on a parcel that once was part of the former General Electric Transformer Plant site in Pittsfield, this project has many linkages including:

- The Pittsfield Economic Development Authority, the designated organization to administer the DEDA
 - The William Stanley Business Park
 - Berkshire Community College wants to locate a training facility in the building for training future employees in the Life Sciences businesses as well as Clean Room technology for the microchip industry.
 - With the development of AMD’s Chip Plant in Malta, NY (north of Albany), it is expected that there will be considerable business spin-off and supporting services growth throughout the broad region surrounding the plant, including Berkshire County.
 - *Economic Development Area (ETA):* The City of Pittsfield is an identified ETA under the Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP), which makes certain sites within the community eligible for a number of development incentives and programs.
 - *Chapter 43D:* In the City of Pittsfield, the William Stanley Business Park is an identified 43D site, which provides a transparent and efficient process for municipal permitting, guarantees local permitting decisions on priority development sites within 180-days, and increases visibility of the community and targeted development sites and gives the City competitive advantages in obtaining various support, including funding, from the Commonwealth.
-

Timeframe: Construction may begin as early as late fall 2016 and take 18 months to complete.

Projects that Enhance the Region: Physical Development

North Sub-Region

Project Name: Greylock Glen Resort

Location: Town of Adams

Status: Planning and permitting complete; implementation on-going.

Project Summary: The Town of Adams is the designated developer for the Greylock Glen Resort, a four-season outdoor recreation and environmental education destination. This project is expected to include high quality lodging and conference facilities, a campground (tent sites and cabins), a performing arts amphitheater, an environmental education center, Nordic ski center, and a multi-use trail system.

This project represents a significant economic boost for the Town of Adams and Berkshire County as a whole. As a potential element of one of the region's three identified economic clusters, *Hospitality and Tourism*, the project will support this cluster for Berkshire County and will contribute as a major driver in the ongoing economic recovery. Importantly, the project's strong outdoor recreational focus aligns completely with the most recent marketing research for the Berkshire Visitor's Bureau which indicates that the single most important reason the Berkshires have a strong tourism economy is the outdoor recreational opportunities available in the region. Through its educational components and programming the project will also strengthen the region's growing Educational cluster.

Funding Source(s): State funding (Capital Budget, Supplemental Budget, MassWorks, MA Department of Conservation and Recreation)

Projected Job Creation: This project is expected to generate an estimated 138 full-time jobs. The labor forces expected from this project include construction, education, retail trade, and leisure and hospitality.

Related Linkages: Situated at the base of Mount Greylock, this project would enhance visitors' use of the Mount Greylock State Reservation. It would also present another destination in northern Berkshire, strengthening the tourism draw in that portion of the county.

- The amphitheater is intended to provide a new type of venue for performing arts in northern Berkshire County, with MassMOCA proposed as the operator, expanding their ability to hold larger shows in varied settings.
 - The Environmental Education Center is expected to be operated as a facility of MCLA and allow an expansion of the fairly new Environmental Program at the College.
 - By adding a significant tourist destination in Adams, it is expected that the visitors' shopping and dining needs will be met in the downtown, strengthening reinvestment efforts there.
 - The Town of Adams is an identified Economic Target Area under the Economic Development Incentive Program, which makes certain sites within the community eligible for a number of development incentives and programs.
 - Greylock Glen is an identified 43D site, which provides a transparent and efficient process for municipal permitting, guarantees local permitting decisions on priority development sites within 180-days, increases the visibility of the community and targeted development sites, and gives the Town competitive advantages in obtaining various support, including funding, from the Commonwealth.
-

Timeframe: The town and DCR are working together on implementation of the trail system, with the start of the first phase of construction of the Glen trails system in Spring 2017 (currently underway). The town is close to hiring an architectural design team to prepare the design and construction plans for the 11,000 s.f. Outdoor Center at the Glen, with preliminary design anticipated in late summer 2017. The town also expects during summer/fall 2017 to conduct an RFQ/RFP process to solicit potential developers for the design, development, and operation of the proposed lodge and conference center.

Project Name: Greylock WORKS (former Cariddi Mill)

Location: City of North Adams

Status: Implementation ongoing.

Project Summary: Greylock WORKS is the redevelopment of the 240,000 square foot former Cariddi Mill in North Adams, MA. The focus is economic and environmental revitalization and quality job creation. The development strategy is conceived of three related, but independent projects – east, central, and west. Programmatically, the east includes a 26,000 SF event space, a commercial kitchen, eight wholesale-scaled food production spaces, an extensive cheese aging facility, a restaurant, and a market to showcase regional craft food; the west will house a 50 room boutique hotel, 23 residential condominiums, and related shared wellness amenities for visitors and residents; the central spine of the project is the Flume, connecting a new waterfront park north of Route 2 with the existing Greylock Park and Alcombright Athletic Field Complex south of the property.

There will be a robust job training and business education component focused on food security, regulatory compliance, and best practices for wholesale production and distribution. An alliance will be formed with a culinary school that offers recreational and professional courses, targeting business planning, marketing, and logistics as critical components of success. Greylock WORKS will serve as a networked platform from which new food businesses can seek seed capital and mentorship.

Funding Source(s): Public and Private

Projected Job Creation: 20

Related Linkages: This project is another example of adaptive reuse of an old mill building, which preserves the local history while serving as an economic engine through its use in the hospitality industry and inclusion of a job training and business education component.

Timeframe: The property was purchased in mid-2015, and hosted a four-day world premiere production by the Williamstown Theatre Festival in late-2015. The projected timeline is:

2016 – building complex stabilization, systems, event space

2017 – food production tenant build-out, continue event space, continue remediation

2018 – south wing, continue food production, continue remediation

2019 – continue south wing, restaurant, begin Flume development

2020 – hotel, residential condos, and amenities, continue Flume development

2021 – continue hotel, residential condos, and amenities

Project Name: Memorial School Redevelopment Project

Project Location: Adams

Status: Ongoing

Project Summary: The size and prominent location of the Memorial School building on Route 8 in downtown Adams creates opportunities for innovative reuse of the building and its grounds. Redevelopment of the 69,786 square foot building has the potential to have a regional impact by providing new workforce housing, as well as nonprofit and public spaces. New uses could provide a catalyst to additional investment in Adams and the region.

Funding Source(s): Several sources of funding are being investigated, including: Berkshire Brownfields; USDA Rural Services; EDA; HUD; and MassDevelopment

Projected Job Creation: The exact number of jobs to be created or retained is unknown at this time.

Related Linkages: The site is well positioned on the Route 8 Corridor in the northern gateway of downtown Adams; as such it has potential to spur spin-off investment in this centrally located area. Redevelopment will promote the reuse of the historic property and facilitate job growth.

Timeframe:

Projects that Enhance the Region: Physical Development Central Sub-Region

Project Name: Berkshire Mall

Location: Town of Lanesborough

Status: Updated April 2017.

Project Summary: The project can be best summarized as follows:

While the Regal Cinema and the Target Department store remain in operation with seemingly good viability, the Berkshire Mall proper continues to struggle. The mall has a new owner and his intentions to revitalize the mall remain uncertain. Of the four anchor stores, Macy's and Best Buy have closed, J. C. Penney's has recently announced its closure as part of a nationwide store closing process, and Sears remains open; however, recent news reports indicate store closures are forecasted for Sears nationally.

Recently, the Baker Hill Road District has sought legislative approval to acquire the mall site for future redevelopment, should the site become available.

Funding Source(s): Private investments; state and federal grants if appropriate to the proposed development.

Projected Job Creation: The number of jobs to be created is unknown at this time.

Related Linkages: Depending upon the final location and purpose(s) of this facility. there is the potential for many linkages.

Timeframe: To be determined

Project Name: Crane Stationery Mill Redevelopment

Location: Town of Dalton

Status: Implementation ongoing.

Project Summary: The Crane Stationery Mill Redevelopment project is an adaptive reuse of a 100,000 sf. multi-story mill vacated by Crane & Company. Now called The Stationery Factory, the old mill has a range of tenants and is undergoing construction for a distillery, nano-brew pub, and a custom furniture manufacturing company. The space is being developed as an event venue with 4 different rooms with the capacity of 700 people.

Funding Source(s): private investment

Projected Job Creation: 5

Related Linkages: This project, the adaptive reuse of a mill, will reuse a structure that would otherwise become vacant or underutilized. This project may be able to be used as a pilot for the redevelopment of other vacant mill structures throughout the county. Tenants that produce artwork or locally crafted alcohol enhance those niche industries in the Berkshires.

Timeframe: Over the next 4 years, the owners hope to complete the creation of a new front of the building and a beer garden, move the loading docks, and put in a passenger elevator, new railings that meet code, and accessible bathrooms on all floors.

Projects that Enhance the Region: Physical Development South Sub-Region

Project Name: Redevelopment of Great Barrington Fairgrounds

Location: Town of Great Barrington

Status: Updated April 2017

Project Summary: This project includes the redevelopment of the 57-acre historic Great Barrington Fairground and racetrack for mixed-use commercial, agricultural incubator, housing and open space/recreation uses.

Funding Source(s): Market Rate Debt, Private Investment and Public: agricultural (Agricultural Preservation Restriction), open space/recreation and housing development subsidies.

Projected Job Creation: The number of jobs to be created is unknown at this time.

Related Linkages: This project has significant linkages to local agriculture and local food production and consumption, both retail and private. It has the potential to be a flagship CSA, increasing the capacity of local and regional CSA's, extending seasons and increasing storage capacity. A large educational component may be developed as well. This project proposal has also generated business, entrepreneurial and technical assistance relationships with the Berkshire Co-op Market, one of the largest employers in Great Barrington. A programmatic and product relationship with Berkshire Hills Regional School District and Southern Berkshire Regional School District, Fairview Hospital, Community Health Program (nutrition) and the Nutrition Center is also envisioned.

Timeframe: To be determined.

Project Name: Monument Mills Area Reuse Planning

Location: Town of Great Barrington

Status: Updated April 2017

Project Summary: The proposed project will redevelop the National Historic Register property into approximately 100 mixed residential units, 12,000 sq. ft. for office and/or retail use, and integrated on-site parking, restaurant/café space, and a River Walk reconnecting the village to the Housatonic River. The site is located within an Economic Opportunity Area.

Funding Source(s): Community Development Block Grant for infrastructure improvements (completed). Developer has been receiving allocations of Massachusetts historic tax credit financing towards the project cost (total cost estimate is \$32.7 million).

Projected Job Creation: The number of jobs to be created is unknown at this time.

Related Linkages: Over the years the Town has used Community Development Block Grant funds to construct infrastructure improvement in Housatonic. Redevelopment of the mills would fully utilize those public investments.

Timeframe: The project is still in the study/design phase.

Project Name: Housatonic School Redevelopment

Location: Town of Great Barrington

Status: Updated April 2017

Project Summary: The Housatonic School Redevelopment project is the adaptive re-use of the former Housatonic Elementary School into a mix-use complex designed to serve as an anchor institution for the Housatonic Village Center.

Funding Source(s): Community Development Block Grant (for site engineering related to parking lot capacity and streetscape improvements around the building). Private equity, and state and federal grants, as appropriate, for the building redevelopment.

Projected Job Creation: The number of jobs to be created is unknown at this time.

Related Linkages: The rehabilitation/re-use of the former school building will connect and improve the neighborhood character by provide much needed community facilities.

Timeframe: The CDBG-funded project will begin in Spring 2017. The town will issue an RFP in 2017 in order to sell or lease the building.

Project Name: River School Redevelopment

Location: Town of Great Barrington

Status: Updated April 2017

Project Summary: This project is an adaptive reuse of the former Searles and Bryant School complex in Downtown Great Barrington. Former owners River School Redevelopment sold the Bryant School and it was redeveloped. It reopened in 2014 as the world headquarters of Iredale Mineral Cosmetics. In 2016, former owners River School Redevelopment sold the remaining Searles School portion of the campus to 79 Bridge Street Realty LLC, which has received its permits to renovate and redevelop the former school into an 88-room, AAA 4-diamond luxury hotel with an indoor pool, fitness room, 5,000-square foot conference room, and a 60-seat restaurant.

Funding Source(s): Private investment.

Projected Job Creation: 30 new jobs in the hotel.

Related Linkages: This project’s development will create linkages with the establishment of a mixed-use, mixed income 24-hour downtown community in the heart of Great Barrington.

- Iredale Mineral Cosmetics was able to expand within the community and provide 50 additional living wage jobs

Timeframe: Expected selective demolition is Winter 2016-2017, and construction in Summer 2017.

Project Name: Niagara Mill Redevelopment

Location: Town of Lenox

Project Summary: Project proponents exploring opportunity to adaptively reuse historic Niagara Mill in Lenox Dale neighborhood of Lenox for a contemporary art museum with café and event space to showcase local and regional contemporary art.

Funding Source(s): Private investment.

Projected Job Creation: 10-20

Related Linkages: The new art museum would enhance the appeal of the Berkshires as an art destination by adding to the existing museums such as MassMOCA, Clark Art Museum, and Norman Rockwell Museum. It would also provide new opportunities for local artists across the region.

Timeframe: To be determined.

Project Name: Miraval-Lenox Expansion at Cranwell

Location: Town of Lenox

Status: Updated April 2017

Project Summary: Cranwell Resort has been purchased by The Miraval Group, and will be expanded and re-named Miraval-Lenox. Planned expansion includes new buildings to house additional hotel rooms, health and wellness facilities, for an estimated project investment of \$60 million.

Funding Source(s): Private investment.

Projected Job Creation: 100 year-round employees

Related Linkages: This is one of several projects that will expand hotel capacity within the South Sub-Region to accommodate increased tourism, including serving the health and wellness market.

Timeframe: Estimated 2019 grand opening.

Project Name: Eastover

Location: Town of Lenox

Status: Updated April 2017

Project Summary: Eastover is updating facilities from a recreational family resort to residential healing retreat. Renovations run the gamut from new roofs and sewer lines to upgrading overnight accommodations, to installing Japanese and English style gardens.

Funding Source(s): Private investment.

Projected Job Creation: The number of jobs to be created is unknown at this time.

Related Linkages: This is one of several projects that will expand hotel capacity within the South Sub-Region to accommodate increased tourism, including serving the health and wellness market.

Timeframe: Estimated completion Summer 2017.

Project Name: Spring Lawn

Location: Town of Lenox

Status: Updated April 2017

Project Summary: The owners of the historic Spring Lawn property adjacent to Shakespeare & Company have a development plan that would transform the 28.8-acre site into a major high-end boutique resort, including cottage-style guestrooms, a restaurant, fitness center, and spa.

Funding Source(s): Private investment

Projected Job Creation: 25-50

Related Linkages: This is one of several projects that will expand hotel capacity within the South Sub-Region to accommodate increased tourism, including serving the health and wellness market.

Timeframe: Estimated Fall 2017 – Spring 2018 completion

Project Name: Walker House Apartments

Location: Town of Lenox

Status: Updated April 2017

Project Summary: This project is for the renovation of The Walker House, an 1804 house and former bed and breakfast, into an 8-unit market rate apartment building. The project will serve community needs by upgrading an important historic structure in a prominent location and adding to the residential mix of accessible dwellings in the center of Lenox.

Funding Source(s): Private investment

Projected Job Creation: N/A

Related Linkages:

Timeframe: Winter 2016-2017 or Spring 2017 completion

Project Name: Lenox Manor

Location: Town of Lenox

Status: Updated April 2017

Project Summary: Lenox Manor will be a 100-room extended stay hotel with a year-round event center designed for weddings, conferences, and retreats (max occupancy of 500 people anticipated). This will involve a total tear down of the existing, 1960s era motel and new construction of the hotel and event center. This includes infrastructure improvements along Route 7.

Funding Source(s): Private investment

Projected Job Creation: 21 full time, permanent employees to be created upon year 2 of operations.

Related Linkages: This is one of several projects that will expand hotel capacity within the South Sub-Region to accommodate increased tourism.

Timeframe: Fall 2017 construction start, Spring/Summer 2017 opening.

Project Name: New England Log Homes

Location: Town of Great Barrington

Status: Updated May 2017

Project Summary: this project is the remediation and redevelopment of the former New England Log Homes site, an 8-acre brownfield in the center of Great Barrington. The redevelopment plan include remediating 100% of the site, 45 units of affordable rental housing, with additional market rate housing, commercial space, and 1.5 acres of public park along the Housatonic River. Estimated Total Development Cost - \$40 million.

Zoning and wetland permits for the affordable housing phase were issued August 2016; funding applications for the affordable housing phase submitted to the state February 2017; Mass DEP approved Remedial Implementation Plan January 2017; final remediation funding secured April 2017.

Funding Source(s): Private investment

Projected Job Creation: TBD

Related Linkages: TBD

Timeframe: Demolition 2017/2018; construction Spring 2018.

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APPENDICES

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**APPENDIX I – BRPC 2017 CEDS
PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

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Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC)
2017 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs)
Public Comment Period

BRPC held the required 30-day comment period from May 3, 2017 until June 1, 2017. The Public Comment period was legally noticed in the Berkshire Eagle, the local newspaper of general distribution. A copy of the notice and confirmation of publication are attached.

During the public comment period, the draft CEDs was posted on BRPC's web site. Once the final CEDs is approved by EDA, it will replace the draft on BRPC's web site.

BRPC received comments from two members of the CEDs Strategy Committee and one member of the BRPC Commission. These comments, primarily clarification of key data points, and suggestions for priority projects, were vetted by the CEDs Strategy Committee and incorporated into the final document.

BRPC also received a request for a copy of the draft CEDs from a member of the general public. A copy of the transmittal letter is attached.

Copies of all comments and documentation of the comment period and availability of the CEDs are attached.

**Public Comment Period
Attachments**

1. Berkshire Eagle verification and receipt for public notice to run on 5/3/17 – dated 5/1/17
2. Photocopy of public notice – 5/3/17
3. Copy of Announcement on BRPC website re: public comment period on CEDS – 5/3/17
4. Comments from Roger Bolton – 5/12/17
5. Comments from Tim Geller – 5/18/17
6. Transmittal letter to Jim Iwanowicz – 5/23/17
7. Comments from Roger Bolton – 5/23/17
8. Comments from Pam Kueber – 5/28/17

William Compton

From: nmclean@berkshireeagle.com on behalf of NENI Notices
<neninotices@berkshireeagle.com>
Sent: Monday, May 01, 2017 11:42 AM
To: William Compton
Subject: Re: Notice of Public Comment Period
Attachments: nmclean_8622_1493653222181.png; 8622.pdf

Bill,

Please send in *your Account number with your next notice.*

-

Your submitted public notice has been booked to run in the **05/03/17** edition of

The Berkshire Eagle

Attached is your proof.

Please review it and reply back before deadline, **today @ 4:30 p.m.** with any changes.

Otherwise, this notice will run AS IS.

Deadlines for cancellations are before *8:30 a.m. of the day before the publication.*

Larger notices need to be cancelled **two days before publication.**

PLEASE when submitting a payment, include the bottom half of your statement that has the account

Number and your account name on it. That way our business office can post the payment to the correct account.

Our new website for etears (electronic tear sheets) is Tecnavia and if you don't have the instructions please email me for it.

Also if your notice is on two pages of the newspaper, Tecnavia will only have the first page. Just email me the newspaper name and date and I can email you out the second page.

PLEASE NOTE: OUR BERKSHIRE EAGLE PUBLIC NOTICES ARE LOADED UP TO THE MNPA WEBSITE DAILY AS REQUIRED BY LAW. <http://masspublicnotices.org/>

Thank you,

Order Confirmation 8622

Customer:	BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING	Acc.Id:	115112
Rep:	NM - Nancy Mclean	Ad No:	8622
Order No:		Auth By:	Willialm Compton
Size:	55.00 X 1.0	Location:	Public Notices BE
Tag Line:	notice of public comment period CED's		

Schedule	05/03/2017	To	05/03/2017			
Issue	Edition	Rundate	Price	Tax	Total	
1	EAG	05/03/2017	189.39	0.00	189.39	

No of Issues:	1
Total Pre Tax:	189.39
Total Tax:	0.00
Total inc Tax:	189.39

Printed on: 05/01/2017 11:40:22
Printed by: NMCLEAN

**Berkshire Regional
Planning Commission
PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT**

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) is seeking public comment on the following:

2017 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) The CEDS process is a coordinated regional planning process that documents economic development activities, ideas, and information throughout Berkshire County and presents a plan for the future economic development of the region. The CEDS process is administered by BRPC and was guided by an advisory committee representing regional businesses, community representatives, and regional economic related organizations.

Copies of the CEDS can be obtained by:

1. Phone: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC), 413-442-1521, ext. 14;
2. BRPC web site:
www.berkshireplanning.org;
3. Walk-in: BRPC, 1 Fern Street, Suite 201, Pittsfield MA 01201.

Comments on the CEDS are due by June 1, 2017 and should be addressed to the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission/BRPC, 1 Fern Street, Suite 201, Pittsfield MA 01201 or via email to

wcompton@berkshireplanning.org

The Commission will be considering the draft CEDS at its meeting on May 18, 2017 at 7PM. The Executive Committee is scheduled to approve the CEDS at its June 1, 2017 meeting at 4PM. Once approved, the CEDS will be submitted to the U. S. Economic Development Administration for review and approval. All BRPC meetings are held at the BRPC offices and open to the public.
05/03/17

Nancy McLean

Public Notice Coordinator

*New England Newspapers, Inc.
75 South Church Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201*

413-496-6260, 1-800-245-0254 opt #3

Please email all notices and responds to:

*Berkshire Eagle
neninotices@berkshireeagle.com
Bennington Banner*

& Manchester Journal
legals@benningtonbanner.com
Brattleboro Reformer
legals@reformer.com

On Mon, May 1, 2017 at 10:45 AM, William Compton <WCompton@berkshireplanning.org> wrote:

Dear Nancy,

Please publish the attached Notice for Public Review and Comment on Wednesday, May 3, 2017.

Billing Information:

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

1 Fenn Street, Suite 201

Pittsfield, MA 01201

Attention: W. Compton

DHCD/DLTA17-EDD

Account Number 115112

Berkshire Eagle, print and website and MA Newspaper Publishers Association website.

Please publish once on May 3, 2017.

Bill Compton

William D. Compton, AICP

Senior Planner – Economic Development

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

1 Fenn Street, Suite 201

Pittsfield, MA 01201

413-442-1521 ext. 14

wcompton@berkshireplanning.org

**Berkshire Regional
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wcompton@berkshireplanning.org

The Commission will be considering the draft CEDS at its meeting on May 18, 2017 at 7PM. The Executive Committee is scheduled to approve the CEDS at its June 1, 2017 meeting at 4PM. Once approved, the CEDS will be submitted to the U. S. Economic Development Administration for review and approval. All BRPC meetings are held at the BRPC offices and open to the public.

05/03/17

Wednesday, May 3, 2017

Class

Public Notices

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) is seeking public comment on the following:

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wcompton@berkshireplanning.org

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05/03/17

CITATION GIVING NOTICE

3

William Compton

From: Marianne Sniezek
Sent: Wednesday, May 03, 2017 8:47 AM
To: William Compton
Cc: Nathaniel Karns
Subject: RE: Copy of 2017 CEDS to be posted on BRPC website for public comment

Posted to announcements

From: William Compton
Sent: Tuesday, May 02, 2017 5:13 PM
To: Marianne Sniezek <msniezek@berkshireplanning.org>
Cc: Nathaniel Karns <nkarns@berkshireplanning.org>
Subject: Copy of 2017 CEDS to be posted on BRPC website for public comment

Marianne,

Attached is the CEDS document that needs to be posted on our website to solicit public comment per the ad that will run on Wednesday in the Berkshire Eagle. Use the ad text (edit as you need to) for the blurb describing the document. The paragraph that's highlighted is the best description to use if space is tight.

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) is seeking public comment on the following:

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Thanks,

Bill Compton

William D. Compton, AICP
Senior Planner – Economic Development
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
1 Fenn Street, Suite 201
Pittsfield, MA 01201
413-442-1521 ext. 14
wcompton@berkshireplanning.org



Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

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Announcements

2017 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Seeking Public Comments

Posted 5.3.17

2017 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) The CEDS process is a coordinated regional planning process that documents economic development activities, ideas, and information throughout Berkshire County and presents a plan for the future economic development of the region. The CEDS process is administered by BRPC and was guided by an advisory committee representing regional businesses, community representatives, and regional economic related organizations.

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2. BRPC web site: www.berkshireplanning.org; Click for CEDs copy <here>
3. Walk-in: BRPC, 1 Fenn Street, Suite 201, Pittsfield MA 01201.

Comments on the CEDS are due by June 1, 2017 and should be addressed to the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission/BRPC, 1 Fenn Street, Suite 201, Pittsfield MA 01201 or via email to wcompton@berkshireplanning.org The Commission will be considering the draft CEDS at its meeting on May 18, 2017 at 7PM. The Executive Committee is scheduled to approve the CEDS at its June 1, 2017 meeting at 4PM. Once approved, the CEDS will be submitted to the U. S. Economic Development Administration for review and approval. All BRPC meetings are held at the BRPC offices and open to the public.

William Compton

From: Roger Bolton <rbolton@williams.edu>
Sent: Friday, May 12, 2017 11:39 AM
To: William Compton
Subject: Comments on draft of 2017 CEDS report

Dear Bill,

I'm really sorry to be so late with some comments and questions on the 2017 CEDS Draft. I've been distracted by various things.... I realize these now may come too late to be of any immediate use, but even if that's the case perhaps they will be useful in the future. I also realize other people, and/you may have already corrected the problems I'm reporting! So, I apologize, but here goes.

Roger Bolton

1. We refer throughout to the "CEDS Strategy Committee." Since the "S" in "CEDS" stands for "Strategy," the term "CEDS Strategy Committee" refers to a "Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Strategy Committee." That is odd. I strongly suggest we change the term to: "CEDS Advisory Committee" throughout.
2. Sometimes we refer to the "Stationery Mill" in Dalton, sometimes (pp. vi, 47) to the "Stationary Mill." By the way, you may be amused to learn that the "Stationary Mill" mistake has been made frequently over the years in our Committee's products, presumably caused by cut-and-paste. On p. 31 we find "Stationery Factory," which is odd.
3. I assume by now you have incorporated up-to-date data on population, labor-force, etc. If the latest available numbers refer to a year earlier than 2016, it would be good to have a footnote saying "latest available data."
4. In some tables and charts, it's not clear what year the data are for (for example, on p. 7); in some the source is not given (for example, on p. 5).
5. On p. 3, the title of the chart is "Net Migration," but the vertical axis is labeled "Percent Change in Population." Net migration is not the same as "change in population." The accompanying text is similarly wrong. The difference between net migration and change in population can be huge, especially in the youngest and older age groups.
6. There is confusion in the use of the term "labor force." On p. iv, it is defined as the number of people in the population, 16 and over. That is not the accepted definition of the labor force. In other places, the same definition is implied or suggested, but not actually stated.
7. On p. 5, the "labor force" is said to be 66,116, without the year being stated. On the accompanying chart, the level for the latest year, 2015, is clearly below 66,000, so the text above must be referring to some earlier year than 2015. The text should refer to the most recent year in the chart.
8. The table gives the l.f. as 68,715, and the source implies the data are for 2014, but that is not consistent with the chart on the previous page, where the dot for 2014 is clearly well below 68,00. This discrepancy is very confusing.
9. Also on p. 6, the l.f. is given as 68,715 and the employment as 62,178, which implies an unemployment rate of 9.5% in 2014; this is higher than the official BLS number for that time. The numbers for the U.S. imply an unemployment rate of 9.8%, which is also higher than the official BLS number. Why the discrepancy? It may be due to some characteristic of the American Community Survey, but it needs to be explained (maybe the ACS is an average of several recent years?).

10. On p. 6, next-to-last line: Why would the presence of UMass in the Pioneer Valley account for a higher percentage of young people _in the labor force_? Are a lot of college students employed part-time?
11. On p. 17, line 4, there is the phrase “without adjusting for inflation.” For many lay persons, “adjusting” for inflation is mysterious. I suggest rewriting the clause: “ since there has been some inflation since 2008, the decrease in real terms has been larger.”
12. On pp. 17 and 33 we refer to “fixed cost liabilities.” The meaning is unclear, and one doesn’t usually combine a flow (cost) and a stock variable (liability) in this way. It would help to give an example, other than pension and health insurance liabilities, which you’ve already mentioned. Do we mean interest on debt? Other kinds of insurance?
13. On p. 27, line 9 from the bottom: The sentence beginning “The rate of decrease” is awkward. I suggest rewriting as: “The rate of decrease of the age 20-40 cohort is much higher than”
14. On p. 30, does the City of Pittsfield still expect to construct the BIC in 2017? On p. 52, did construction begin in the fall of 2016?
15. On p. 31, second paragraph, the text tells _how_ the Sprague Complex was redeveloped, but doesn’t say that for the Rice Mill and the Cable Mills.
16. On p. 33, first sentence: It implies that “a handful of large companies” was the _entire_ manufacturing sector in the 1970s, which is definitely not the case. Even then there were lots of smaller manufacturing firms. Remember that manufacturing in the 1970s would include printing and publishing, food products, wood products, paper, the old Pfizer (now Specialty Minerals, I think) operation in Adams (a significant operation, but not like GE or Sprague, and one that combined mining and manufacturing), and various other things.

William Compton

From: Tim Geller <tccdc@verizon.net>
Sent: Thursday, May 18, 2017 3:01 PM
To: William Compton
Cc: tim@cdcsb.org
Subject: RE: CEDS Committee Meeting - April 27, 2017

Bill,
Please find below a description and update for the NE Log Homes. Also updated, the time line on the RiverSchool project.
Thanks much!
Tim

New England Log Homes:
This project is the remediation and redevelopment of the former New England Log Homes site, an 8-acre brownfield in the center of Great Barrington. The redevelopment plan includes remediating 100% of the site, 45 units of affordable rental housing units, with additional market rate housing, commercial space 1.5 acres of public park along the Housatonic River. Estimated Total Development Cost, \$40M.

Project Update, 2017
Zoning and wetland permits for the affordable housing project were issued in August 2016; funding applications for the affordable housing were submitted to the State, February 2017; Mass DEP approved the Remedial Implementation Plan for the site, January 2017. Final remediation funding for the site was secured in April 2017. Construction start in Spring 2018

RiverSchool: Timeframe: Expected selective demolition is Winter 2017-2018, and construction in Summer 2018.

Timothy Geller
Executive Director
CDC of South Berkshire
PO Box 733 / 17 Bridge Street
Great Barrington, MA 01230
(413)528-7788
cdcsb.org facebook.com/cdcsb



From: William Compton [mailto:WCompton@berkshireplanning.org]
Sent: Monday, May 01, 2017 1:14 PM
To: Tim Geller
Subject: RE: CEDS Committee Meeting - April 27, 2017

Tim,

Thanks for your message. Yes, please send me a project update.

Bill

From: Tim Geller [<mailto:tccdc@verizon.net>]
Sent: Thursday, April 27, 2017 7:28 PM
To: William Compton <WCompton@berkshireplanning.org>
Cc: tim@cdcsb.org
Subject: RE: CEDS Committee Meeting - April 27, 2017

Bill,
Thanks for all your great work and leading the meeting today!
I noticed that the NE Log Homes site, listed as a priority site on p. 47, is not included in the South Sub-region beginning on page 54. Do you need a project summary or update?
Thanks!
Tim

Timothy Geller
Executive Director
CDC of South Berkshire
PO Box 733 / 17 Bridge Street
Great Barrington, MA 01230
(413)528-7788
cdcsb.org facebook.com/cdcsb

Like Us on Facebook!



From: William Compton [<mailto:WCompton@berkshireplanning.org>]
Sent: Friday, April 21, 2017 2:58 PM
To: roger.e.bolton@williams.edu; Heather Boulger; dcurtis@1berkshire.com; jcurtis@berkshirecc.edu; bgallant@pittsfieldch.com; tccdc@verizon.net; kgirouard@msbdc.umass.edu; nhaddad@1berkshire.com; mnuvallie@northadams-ma.gov; ifrasch@gmail.com; Chris Rembold; hope@is183.org; cpans@mac.com; mike.hoffman@tdbanknorth.com; mfranklin@pittsfieldch.com
Cc: janderson@pittsfieldcoop.com; choyt@berkshirecc.edu; Nathaniel Karns; William Compton
Subject: CEDS Committee Meeting - April 27, 2017

Dear CEDS Committee Members,

We have scheduled a meeting of the Berkshire County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee for April 27, 2017 at 11:00AM in the Large Conference Room of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission's office at 1 Fenn Street in Pittsfield.

Attached are the Agenda and the draft of the 2017 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) document.

I'm looking forward to seeing you next Thursday.

Sincerely,

Bill Compton

William D. Compton, AICP
Senior Planner – Economic Development
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

1 Fenn Street, Suite 201
Pittsfield, MA 01201
413-442-1521 ext. 14
wcompton@berkshireplanning.org

6

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
1 FENN STREET, SUITE 201, PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS 01201
TELEPHONE (413) 442-1521 · FAX (413) 442-1523
Massachusetts Relay Service: TTY: 771 or 1-800-439-2370
www.berkshireplanning.org

KYLE HANLON, Chair
SHEILA IRVIN, Vice-Chair
MARIE RAFTERY, Clerk
CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

NATHANIEL W. KARNS, A.I.C.P.
Executive Director

May 23, 2017

Mr. Jim Iwanowicz
555 Peru Road
Windsor, MA 01270

Re: 2017 Draft Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Dear Mr. Iwanowicz,

Enclosed is a copy of Berkshire Regional Planning Commission's (BRPC) 2017 Draft Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The public comment period for the CEDS runs through June 1, 2017. After that, BRPC will be submitting the document to the Economic Development Administration for review and approval in early June.

If you have any questions, or require any additional information, please contact me at 413-442-1521, ext. 14 or wcompton@berkshireplanning.org.

Sincerely,



William D. Compton, AICP
Senior Planner

Enclosures

William Compton

From: Roger Bolton <rbolton@williams.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, May 23, 2017 12:05 PM
To: William Compton
Subject: MORE COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS ON THE CEDS DRAFT

Good morning, Bill: Here are some more comments/suggestions on the CEDS draft.

1. Unemployment Rate. The draft (p. 7) says the 2016 unemployment rate is 3.1%. I understand that the rate fell to around 3% in the last part of 2016, but it jumped back again in the first part of 2017; it was 5.0% in March 2017 and 4.9% in April (I believe the latter number was announced just this week?). Therefore, the 3.1% figure appears suspect, and probably reflects some seasonal changes. The average rate during calendar year 2016 was 4.3%. I think the annual average and the recent months' figures are more revealing.

I also suggest adding a couple of sentences to make it clear the unemployment rate is affected both by employment increases and by labor force decreases, and that some of the labor force decrease is due to people leaving the labor force because they have become discouraged.

2. At last week's Commission meeting in Lenox, Jamie Mullen argued that it was a "contradiction" to say that the region has a "strength" in being near major metropolitan areas, but also to say that it has "weaknesses" in availability of public transportation and in access to interstate highways. The ensuing discussion suggested some clarification is needed.

I suggest the following simple clarification. in the "Proximity" paragraph, add the point that our proximity is an advantage in the tourism and vacation home markets because large number of visitors rely on private automobile travel, but also say that problems of access limit our attractiveness for visitors who rely on public transportation. These problems have prevented us from fully exploiting our proximity, and they may become more significant in the future, as both younger and older people are looking for access by public transportation. Then refer to the following section on "Weaknesses" for elaboration.

Thanks.

Roger

Roger Bolton, Professor Emeritus of Economics and Research Associate in Environmental Studies
Williams College

William Compton

From: Pam Kueber <pkueber@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, May 28, 2017 1:59 PM
To: William Compton
Cc: Gwen Miller
Subject: Comment to CEDS

Hi Bill,

I met you at the Affordable Housing day at Shakespeare and mentioned I had some comments regarding the CEDs. Of particular interest re the final, which I know is going to Exec Comm vote on June 1, I would like to make the following suggestion regarding Lenox-area projects starting on Page 63. However, I am copying Gwen in case she disagrees -- I will leave it up to you two.

I reviewed the list of Lenox-area projects with an eye to assessing how significant they were and have the following suggestions:

1. Make **Tanglewood Expansion** the #1 Item. \$30 million investment etc. I can't find first announcement story, but recall the expansion will set the stage for Twood to hold programs year-round. Twood is arguably the single most important economic driver for the travel and tourism industry in the County.
<http://www.berkshireeagle.com/stories/lenox-select-board-oks-plan-for-multimillion-dollar-complex-at-tanglewood,505699?>
and <http://www.berkshireeagle.com/stories/tanglewoods-high-note-104-million-impact-on-berkshire-economy,507368?>
2. **Miraval-Lenox** Expansion at Cranwell. This is a big one. I would make it the #2 item. Within Related Linkages I think you could say "expand lodging capacity including within revitalized historic Great Estates". Note, it's an \$80 million investment (I *think*) if you include purchase price.
3. Make a new combo Project as #3 -- **Great Estate Revitalization**; In addition to the Miraval-Cranwell project... several other significant projects in South County. Tally up investment (bullets are from Eagle
<http://www.berkshireeagle.com/stories/miraval-group-completes-22m-purchase-of-cranwell-ahead-of-expansion-plan,496824--> :
 1. - **Elm Court**, Front Yard/Travaasa, 96 new rooms plus 16 existing, \$50 million, TBA.

2. - (Unnamed) at **DeSisto** property, 209 units total, \$150 million, TBA.
3. Move **Eastover** to this section
4. Move **Spring Lawn** to this section
4. **Niagara Mill Redevelopment** -- info now outdated. A company is looking at it for medical marijuana cultivation and sales. Not sure if we should really even put it in the CEDs until it's a done deal.
5. **Courtyard by Marriott** -- **remove**; not significant enough and there are lots of such hotels going up all over the county
6. **Morrison Home Improvement** -- **remove**; not significant enough

A few other thoughts, some of which are surely too late to get in the document but which could be food for thought for next time:

1. page v. -- Projects representing greatest needs regionally -- how about adding Broadband for All?
2. p. vi -- fix to reflect any changes made to Lenox projects as described above e.g. take out Marriott Courtyard and Eastover; add Tanglewood
3. How big is the aggregate Berkshires economy -- in dollars? I don't recall seeing this in the document. Not sure which number(s) to use -- total payroll? is there such thing as a county GDP? Commercial and industrial values and/or taxes paid (asset utilization)?
4. p.51, add the baseline for each performance measure so that we know where we are starting. In addition, I would translate items 10 and 11 (and others) into measures of accomplishments (not activities) e.g. Number of new jobs added in identified industries or occupational clusters after workforce trainings are completed. Also in this section, add metric for economic growth, if any, from #3

Thank you for your consideration!

Best, Pam

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APPENDIX II – BRPC 2017 CEDS APPROVAL PROCESS

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**Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC)
2017 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs)
Approval Process**

On April 27, 2017, the BRPC CEDs Strategy Committee met to receive and review a draft of the 2017 CEDs. At this meeting, the committee was informed that the CEDs would be vetted by this committee, the BRPC Commission, and the BRPC Executive Committee; and then submitted to the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for review and approval.

The committee was given an overview of the CEDs, particularly the SWOT Analysis and key data contained therein. The committee discussed the potential redevelopment of the Berkshire Mall as a key economic development project. The committee also discussed added-value agriculture as a growing sector in the region's economy.

Copies of the agenda, sign-in sheet, and meeting minutes are attached.

On May 18, 2017, the BRPC Commission met and the draft CEDs was presented. The commission discussed the key findings of the SWOT Analysis, Economic Resiliency, and the CEDs' priority projects. The commission moved to authorize the Executive Committee to take final action on the CEDs at its June 1st meeting. See minutes at Section VI., page 3.

Copies of the agenda, sign-in sheet, and meeting minutes are attached.

On June 1, 2017, the BRPC Executive Committee met and was informed that the commission had given them the authority to give final approval to the 2017 CEDs. The committee was informed about the public comment period that had just closed and steps taken to include comments into the final CEDs. The committee approved the CEDs with modifications on behalf of the commission. See minutes at Section VI. A., page 3.

Copies of the agenda, sign-in sheet, and meeting minutes are attached.

On June 8, 2017, the BRPC CEDs Strategy Committee met. The committee was given an update on the CEDs approval process by the BRPC Commission and the BRPC Executive Committee, and the inclusion of comments in the final CEDs. The committee was informed of BRPC's intent to ask EDA to designate the region an Economic Development District (EDD) when the CEDs was transmitted to EDA for their review and approval. The committee made a motion to proceed with seeking EDD designation. See minutes at page 2.

Copies of the agenda, sign-in sheet, and meeting minutes are attached.

On September 28, 2017, the BRPC Commission met and approved supplemental submission materials.

Copies of the agenda, sign-in sheet, and meeting minutes are attached.

On December 12, 2017, the BRPC CEDs Committee met and approved supplemental submission materials, as well as resubmission with these supplemental materials integrated into a full document.

Copies of the agenda, sign-in sheet, and meeting minutes are attached.

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BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
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KYLE HANLON, Chair
SHEILA IRVIN, Vice-Chair
MARIE RAFTERY, Clerk
CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

NATHANIEL W. KARNS, A.I.C.P.
Executive Director

Berkshire Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee

Agenda

April 27, 2017 | 11:00 AM

BRPC | 1 Fenn Street | Pittsfield, MA 01201

1. Call to Order
2. Comments from the Public
3. Update on CEDS submittal process and timeline
4. Review of Draft of the 2017 CEDS
5. Update on Economic Development District (EDD) submittal process and timeline
6. Other Items
7. Scheduling of Next Meeting
8. Adjournment

City and Town Clerks: Please post this notice pursuant to M.G.L., Chapter 39, Section 23B

Berkshire Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee

Meeting Minutes

April 27, 2017 – 11:00 AM

Committee Members Present: Roger Bolton, Heather Boulger, David Curtis, Jill Sasso Curtis, Bonnie Galant, Tim Geller, Keith Girouard, Nathan Haddad, Mike Nuvallie, Chris Rembold, Cynthia Pansing

BRPC Staff Present: Nat Karns, Pat Mullins, Bill Compton

Mr. Karns opened the meeting at 11:00 AM

No comments from the public.

Mr. Karns gave an update on the Economic Development District (EDD) application submittal process and timeline. A draft was submitted to EDA in February 2016, but EDA did not address it until last Fall, and only made suggestions 60 days ago. Berkshire County qualifies as an EDD based upon economic distress criteria, primarily in Pittsfield, Adams and North Adams. Receiving EDD designation creates countywide possibilities for projects. To submit the final application, a majority of the cities and towns, including Pittsfield and North Adams, must indicate support. Given the uncertainty of future funding for EDA in the Federal budget, BRPC recommends waiting until there is strong evidence Congress will fund EDA for FFY 2018 before pursuing EDD status. Even if EDA is defunded, we will try to continue the CEDS process because it has broader implications, especially in the review of projects.

Discussion of the CEDS Content. Mr. Compton gave an overview of the CEDS content and submittal process. The document contains a Description of the Region, Demographic and Workforce Data, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis, Vision Statement, Action Plan, and List of Priority Projects. The CEDS will be vetted by this committee, the BRPC Commission, and Executive Committee; and then submitted to EDA for review and approval. The submittal package contains a checklist and self-evaluation form.

Job loss and changes in the workforce – cumulatively job loss is not that great; however, there have been significant shifts from higher paying manufacturing sector jobs to lower paying service sector jobs.

The population continues to decline, especially in the crucial 25-40-year-old age cohort.

Unemployment is now lower than the nation, but jobs are lower paying and total wages reflect that.

Berkshire County does well compared to other regions in having a workforce with a high school diploma or some college, but we fall behind when it comes to having a workforce with college and graduate degrees.

We do not believe the CEDS can provide the information to tell how to increase the Location Quotient (LQ) for employment sectors with higher wages. We have data, but no means or method of guiding economic growth to a particular sector.

We lack anchors such as a military installation or a higher education flagship school, thus, as a semi-rural region we will continue to struggle.

The committee suggested exploring linking medical and health science to education – “Eds and Meds.”

The committee discussed the role of agriculture, specifically value-added activities like organic farming. This is an emerging industry nationally and a good fit for Berkshire County. Additional information will be added about value-added agriculture and it will be give more emphasis in goals and projects.

The region’s economy was once very dependent on manufacturing and is more diverse now. Manufacturing also now requires fewer workers to get the same value of product to market.

The committee had a focused discussion about the Berkshire Mall. This site is both an opportunity and a threat. It is a threat because two of its anchor stores (Macy’s and Best Buy) have closed, a third, JC Penneys, has announced its closure, and the fourth and final anchor, Sears, has indicated closures in the near future. Loss of anchors in any mall reduces foot traffic leading to the closure of smaller stores, and Berkshire Mall has experienced that as well. The mall is an opportunity because if it should become available as a redevelopment site, it would be the largest in Berkshire County. The Baker Hill Road District is seeking legislative action that would allow it to acquire the mall should it become available. Impediments to redevelopment include its current ownership and not knowing if the owner would be willing to consider selling the property and any regulatory constraints that may be imposed by the Town of Lanesborough, the jurisdiction where the mall is located.

The site is 86 acres, making it 2.5 times larger than any other parcel currently available. It was noted that any future expansion of local manufacturers could require sites allowing a building footprint of approximately 200,000 sf. The mall site could accommodate 3-4 buildings of that size.

The committee also discussed various virtues of industrial use versus mixed-use and what those uses might be. It was decided that the committee would keep redevelopment of the mall site as a priority project to warrant future research and discussion before any recommendations could be made.

The transportation infrastructure was discussed, and it was noted that most manufacturing in our area is “just in time” manufacturing that depends on trucking to get product to market quickly, making traditional railway freight less critical.

Projects and Project Focus. The committee discussed how the CEDS is used and whether it is a tool for reporting all projects, or if it should focus on just a few, perhaps one or two, that would have a greater regional impact. It was determined that reporting on multiple projects is useful, especially in guiding project review and seeking all types of funding, not just EDA Public Works funds. The committee determined that going forward it would be useful to focus on one or two strategic target areas, for example, value-added agriculture or the Berkshire Mall and make these

part of a longer-term development strategy. The committee also asked staff to develop a matrix showing long-, medium-, and short-term projects.

There was a discussion about the statement that affordable housing is identified as a Strength. This is true for northern Berkshire County, but not so for the southern part of the county. Affordable housing is readily available in Pittsfield and North Adams, but not in Great Barrington. This has an adverse effect on workers who must live greater distances from their jobs to find affordable housing and indicates a need to pair affordable housing with job centers.

Next meeting June 8, 2017 from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

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Executive Director

MEETING NOTICE

A meeting of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
will be held on:

Thursday, May 18, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

Please Note the change in location to avoid parking lot construction and 3rd Thursday in Pittsfield.

LENOX TOWN HALL

Meeting Material: All written materials for the meeting are posted on BRPC's website: www.berkshireplanning.org. Click on the calendar date for the meeting and materials available will be listed.

AGENDA

I. Opening (7:00-7:05)

- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Approval of Minutes
 - 1) March 16, 2017 Regular Meeting
 - 2) January 19, 2017 Executive Session – and authorize release
 - 3) March 16, 2017 Executive Session – and authorize release

II. Comments from the Public (7:05-7:10)

Members of the public may offer comments regarding topics which are on the agenda or other matters which they wish to bring to the Commission's attention. Comments are limited to no more than three minutes and are to be directed to the Commission.

III. Delegates' Issues (7:10-7:15)

Delegates and Alternates may bring up any issue not on the agenda.

IV. Senator Adam Hinds (7:15-7:45)

Senator Adam Hinds will give his impressions from his first four months in the State Senate and his priorities. There will also be a chance for a dialogue between the Senator and BRPC Delegates and Alternates.

V. Proposed Transportation Improvement Program for FY 2018-2022 (7:45-8:05)

The updated Transportation Improvement Program for the Berkshires which establishes which projects will receive the limited federal transportation funds in the region will be before the

(over)

Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization at its meeting on May 23rd. Your discussion and decision will instruct the BRPC Chair on how to vote at the MPO meeting.

VI. Review of Draft 2017 Berkshire County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (8:05-8:30)

Senior Planner Bill Compton will present key portions of the draft CEDS to the Commission. For the past four years, we have only needed to provide annual updates; this is a new document reflecting considerable changes in what the U.S. Economic Development Administration is requesting and will keep the region eligible to apply for public works and other grants supporting economic development activities in the region, as well as be eligible for Economic Development District status. We also request that the Commission authorize that the Executive Committee may take final action on the CEDS at its June 1st meeting.

VII. Approval of Letter on H. 1083 – An Act Extending the Approval Time for Approval Not Required Plans (sponsor: Rep. Cariddi) (8:30-8:35)

VIII. Approval of Letter on S.1993 – An Act Protecting Municipal Authority Relative to Airports (sponsor: Senator Tarr, co-sponsors: Senator Hinds and Representative Pignatelli) (8:35-8:45)

IX. Adoption of FY 2018 Budget for the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (8:45-8:55)

X. Appointment to the Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority Board (8:50-9:00)

XI. Report of the BRPC Nominating Committee – Officers for FY 2018 (9:00-9:05)

XII. Approval of Executive Committee Actions between March 16 and May 18, 2017 (9:05-9:10)

XIII. Executive Director's Report (9:10-9:15)

- A. MassDOT Capital Investment Plan 2018-2022 Berkshire Public Meeting – Tuesday, May 23rd, 6:30 p.m., MassDOT District 1, Lenox
- B. Mass Association of Planning Directors Conference in Pittsfield – Thursday and Friday, June 15-16th, Crowne Plaza
- C. 5th Thursday Dinner for Planning & Zoning Boards – June 29th, Large Scale Solar, Mazzeo's Ristorante, Pittsfield
- D. District Local Technical Assistance – Status in State Budget for FY 2018
- E. MassDOT Small Bridge Projects in Berkshires
- F. Other

XIV. Adjournment (9:15)

Other interested citizens and officials are invited to attend.

All times listed are estimates of when specific agenda items may be discussed.

City and Town Clerks: Please post this notice pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 39, Section 23B

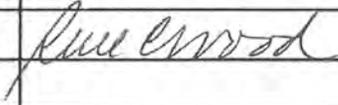
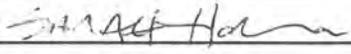
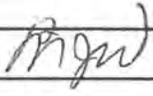
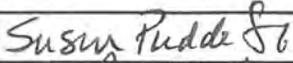
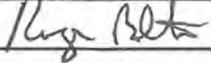
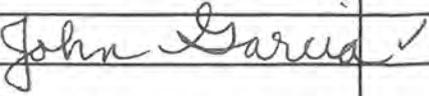
Alternate/Delegate please sign next to your name, Staff or Others sign at the bottom:

COMMUNITY	Last Name	First Name	D/A	Signature	18-May
ADAMS	Moderski	Sandra	D		
	Duval	John	A		
ALFORD	Glover	Alex	D		
	VACANT		A		
BECKET	Ronzio	Robert	D		
	LaBelle	Gale	A		
CHESHIRE	Traub	Peter	D	<i>Peter Traub</i>	✓
	Francesconi	Carol	A		
CLARKSBURG	Matys	Audrey	D		
	McKinney	Carl	A		
DALTON	Darby	Caleb	D		
	Bishop	Robert	A		
EGREMONT	Cherin	Gregory	D		
	Ogden	Charles	A		
FLORIDA	Brule	Tom	D		
	Dobbert	Christine	A		
GT BARRINGTON	Fick	Malcolm	D		
	Higa	Jeremy	A		
HANCOCK	Johnson	Blake	D		
	VACANT		A		
HINSDALE	Brown	Dan	D		
	VACANT		A		

Alternate/Delegate please sign next to your name, Staff or Others sign at the bottom:

COMMUNITY	Last Name	First Name	D/A	Signature	18-May
LANESBOROUGH	Tinkham	Ron	D		
	Hickey	Jack	A		
LEE	Bluhm	Peter	D		
	Donovan	Buck	A	<i>Buck Donovan</i>	✓
LENOX	Kueber	Pam	D	<i>Pam Kueber</i>	✓
	Fowler	Kenneth	A		
MONTEREY	Klein	Larry	D		
	Basler	Kenn	A		
MT WASHINGTON	Bott	Robert	D		
	Lovejoy	James	A	<i>James Lovejoy</i>	✓
NEW ASHFORD	Phelps	Mark	D		
	Flicker	Kevin	A		
NEW MARLBOROUGH	Mullen	James	D	<i>James Mullen</i>	✓
	Hardyman	Patricia	A		
NORTH ADAMS	Hanlon	Kyle	D	<i>Kyle Hanlon</i>	✓
	Nuvallie	Michael	A		
OTIS	Kobrin	Harold	D		
	Ernst	Michael	A		
PERU	Haupt	Sam	D		
	VACANT		A		
PITTSFIELD	Irvin	Sheila	D	<i>Sheila Irvin</i>	✓

Alternate/Delegate please sign next to your name, Staff or Others sign at the bottom:

COMMUNITY	Last Name	First Name	D/A	Signature	18-May
	Hoss	CJ	A		✓
RICHMOND	Ellis	Adeline	D		
	Hanson	John	A		
SANDISFIELD	Bottum Sr.	Gary	D		
	Snyder	Andrew	A		
SAVOY	Tynan	John	D		
	LaBonte	Daniel	A		
SHEFFIELD	Smith	Kenneth	D		
	Wood	Rene	A		✓
STOCKBRIDGE	Raftery	Marie	D		
	Owens	Carole	A		
TYRINGHAM	Alsop	Christina	D		
	Hudson	Sarah	A		✓
WASHINGTON	Wiley	Marilyn	D		✓
	Case	Michael	A		
WEST STOCKBRIDGE	Bixby	Dana	D		
	Zick	Karen	A		
WILLIAMSTOWN	Puddester	Susan	D		✓
	Bolton	Roger	A		✓
WINDSOR	Garcia	John	D		✓
	Crane	Timothy	A		
				TOTAL ATTENDING	0

Alternate/Delegate please sign next to your name, Staff or Others sign at the bottom:

COMMUNITY	Last Name	First Name	D/A	Signature	18-May
<i>BRPC Staff/ Other</i>	<i>Last Name</i>	<i>First</i>		<i>Signature</i>	
BRPC	Sniezek	Marianne		<i>M Sniezek</i>	
BRPC	Karns	Nat		<i>Nat Karns</i>	
BRPC	Matuszko	Tom		<i>Tom Matuszko</i>	
BRPC	Gaherty	Lauren			
BRPC	Kittross	Laura			
BRPC	Koirala	Anuja			
BRPC	Kus	Clete		<i>Clete Kus</i>	
BRPC	Maloy	Mark			
BRPC	Martin	Sandra			
BRPC	Mullins	Pat			
BRPC	Coughlin	Eammon			
BRPC	Provencher	Melissa			
BRPC	Lindsey	Emily			
BERKSHIRE EAGLE	LINSDAY	DICK			
I BERKSHIRE	MCKEEVER	ANDY	✓		
I BERKSHIRE	DANIELS	TAMMY			
BERKSHIRE EAGLE	DENERS	PHIL			
WILLIAMSTOWN	SMERNOFF	PAUL			
PITTSFIELD	PARIS	JOHN			
LENOX	KETCHUM	CHRIS			

BRPC

Compton

Bill

Billington

KYLE HANLON, Chair
SHEILA IRVIN, Vice-Chair
MARIE RAFTERY, Clerk
CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

NATHANIEL W. KARNS
Executive Director

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Thursday May 18, 2017
At the Lenox Town Hall

I. Call to Order

A. The meeting is called to order at: 7:00 PM

Chair Kyle Hanlon reminded all per the open meeting law, BRPC records all meetings. Others may record the meeting after informing the chair. Any documents presented must be left with the chair at the meeting.

B. Introductions/Roll Call

The following Commission members are present:

Peter Truab – Cheshire Delegate
Buck Donovan – Lee Delegate
Pam Kueber – Lenox Delegate
Jim Lovejoy – Mt. Washington Alternate
James Mullin – New Marlborough Delegate
Kyle Hanlon – North Adams Delegate
Sheila Irvin – Pittsfield Delegate
CJ Hoss – Pittsfield Alternate
Rene Wood – Sheffield Alternate
Carole Owens – Stockbridge Alternate
Sarah Hudson – Tyringham Alternate
Marilyn Wiley – Washington Delegate
Dana Bixby – West Stockbridge Delegate
Susan Puddester – Williamstown Delegate
Roger Bolton – Williamstown Alternate
John Garcia – Windsor Delegate

Staff Present:

Nathaniel Karns – Executive Director
Thomas Matuszko – Assistant Director
Clete Kus – Transportation Program Manager
Bill Compton – Senior Planner
Pat Mullins - Community Development Program Manager

Others Present:

Senator Adam Hinds
Andy McKeever – iberkshires

C. Approval of Minutes

1. March 16, 2017 Regular Meeting

Sarah Hudson moved to approve; seconded by Rene Wood. Unanimously approved with 6 abstentions.

2. January 19, 2017 Executive Session – and authorize release

Motion not needed.

3. March 16, 2017 Executive Session – and authorize release

Rene Wood moved to approve; seconded by Sarah Hudson. Unanimously approved with 2 abstentions.

II. Comments from the Public – None

III. Delegate & Alternate Issues – None

IV. Senator Adam Hinds

Senator Adam Hinds explained his priorities. Currently he is working on the Senate budget process. Hinds stated there needs to be more investment in the western part of the state because of the changes in the past twenty years, the decrease in population, the lack internet, the lack of public transportation. These changes impact our municipalities and school budgets and must be addressed. The state needs to double down on high speed internet and education funding. The lack of internet access does not allow people to work from home. This causes losses on housing sales. There is a full accounting of MBI on how money is spent and what is left. The proposed increase in energy cost is unacceptable. All these issues are being brought to the attention of the governor. Western Massachusetts is economically distressed. Boston cannot compete with the Berkshires in terms of nature, quality of life and where you want to raise a family. In a couple of years, we should begin to see changes in Western Massachusetts based on the efforts.

The Senate version of the budget is very serious in the investment of education. The Foundation budget review and recommendation are based on a study done that shows schools are spending more on retirees benefits and special education than we think. The state needs to be compensating those expenses through the foundation budget. The Senate adopted the corrective measures needed for special education expenditures. The focus is on the "CommWEALTH".

The biggest problem with the budget is the revenue is lower than the expenditures. We cannot balance the budget. We have more jobs but not more income. The increase in jobs are in the lower paying sectors. Tax code changes have affected the revenue dollars. The state should tax online sales and Airbnb. We need to convince the governor that Arts, Tourism, and Cultural income does increase the impact on our economy. For every dollar spent on tourism there is seven dollars generated in hotel and food revenue.

Jim Lovejoy pointed out there is no strong vision for internet access. We should not set our sights too low, for economic development we need the best technology and set our sights higher. North Adams and Pittsfield will have substandard internet infrastructure. Time Warner / Spectrum does not meet the community's needs. There are five community's working together on this issue.

Rene Wood brought up the issue of Berkshire County has no Boston TV channel. Berkshire County is treated like we are from New York. Spectrum should not get away with that and give Berkshire County residents a Springfield channel as an equivalent channel. Spectrum is also going to encrypt their signals because of cable theft. In the future, there will be a \$7.00 per TV charge for an encryption device after the first free year. There is no documented proof of this theft.

Rene also mentioned how fundamental it is to the communities with no staff to receive BRPC's assistance provide through the District Local Technical Assistance funding. Rene requested Senator Hinds efforts to get the approval of these funds. CJ Hoss also pointed out if zoning reform is passed their will be a greater burden on the communities who will need DLTA assistance from BPRC. Senator Hinds agreed on the importance but DLTA is a negotiation process in the budget.

Senator Hinds also will be looking at legislation to allow local government to impose additional taxing

authority to generate more transportation revenue.

All thanked Senator Adam Hinds for coming and his efforts for Berkshire County.

V. Proposed Transportation Improvement Program for FY 2018-2022

The updated Transportation Improvement Program for the Berkshires which establishes which projects will receive the limited federal transportation funds in the region will be before the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization at its meeting on May 23rd.

Transportation Manager Clete Kus presented the staff recommendations for improvements to highways, intersections, sidewalks, pavement resurfacing, bicycle and pedestrian projects, and bridge improvements. Also presented was the Transit budget for new buses and maintenance of existing vehicles for fiscal years 2018 to 2022.

Clete explained to spend out all the money available for projects there are no scenarios for the commission to discuss and instruct the BRPC chair how to vote. Also, there are other projects that are not in the design process yet and could not be included in the recommended projects for FY 2018 to 2022.

Clete asked the Commission to recommend how the Chair should vote on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) at the MPO meeting on May 23th.

Jamie Mullen made a motion for the Chair to endorse staff recommendations in the updated Transportation Improvement Program as presented at the next MPO meeting; Rene Wood seconded. Unanimously approved with 1 abstentions.

VI. Review of Draft 2017 Berkshire County Comprehensive Econ

Senior Planner Bill Compton presented key portions of the draft CEDS to the Commission. For the past four years, we have only needed to provide annual updates; this is a new document reflecting considerable changes in what the U.S. Economic Development Administration is requesting and will keep the region eligible to apply for public works and other grants supporting economic development activities in the region, as well as be eligible for Economic Development District status.

Bill explained the CEDS document enables municipalities and organizations to access U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant funds. An approved CEDS is a prerequisite to receive funding from EDA.

The CEDS is a way for municipalities and organizations to share economic development projects and initiatives.

Bill pointed out Berkshire County's biggest loss is young adults, unemployment is down while at the same time the employment has shifted to lower paying jobs. Bill reviewed Berkshire County's strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats.

Bill explained the region's ability to recover quickly, withstand or avoid a shock, i.e. a natural disaster or closure of a large employer.

There was a discussion on the strengths that Berkshire County is accessible to Boston and New York City via car however access via passenger train is not easy. Interstate Railroad for freight is a strength but passenger rail is a weakness.

After a discussion on strengths and weakness, the group requested the points be clarified in the final document. Nat also explained New England Homes Project will be added to the list of projects.

The Commission was requested to authorize the Executive Committee take final action on the CEDS at its June 1st meeting.

Rene Wood moved to authorize the Executive Committee take final action on the CEDS at its June 1st meeting; seconded by Susan Puddester. Unanimously approved.

VII. Approval of Letter on H. 1083 – An Act Extending the Approval Time for Approval Not Required Plans (sponsor: Rep. Cariddi)

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission requested that the Committee expeditiously support the bill filed by Representative Cariddi which provides for a small extension of time for action by local planning boards to act on so-called Approval Not Required subdivision plans.

Nat explained the current time limit is only 21 days and the bill would allow up to 45 days, which is not an unreasonable time to allow for review since some boards meet once a month.

James Mullen moved to approve the Letter on H. 1083 – An Act Extending the Approval Time for Approval Not Required Plans with a correction; seconded by Sheila Irvin. Unanimously approved.

VIII. Approval of Letter on S.1993 – An Act Protecting Municipal Authority Relative to Airports (sponsor: Senator Tarr, co-sponsors: Senator Hinds and Representative Pignatelli)

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission requested that the Committee support the bill filed by Senator Bruce Tarr which protects municipal authority relative to airports. This bill serves to protect the home rule authority of municipalities to regulate the use of land within their boundaries for private, non-commercial airports.

Rene asked to change some of the verbiage. After a discussion, Kyle asked for a motion.

Jamie Mullen moved to approve the modified Letter on S.1993 – An Act Protecting Municipal Authority Relative to Airports with modification; seconded by Rene Wood. Unanimously approved.

IX. Adoption of FY 2018 Budget for the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

Tom explained the proposed budget for FY 2018. The reason for the increase is for an additional planner to work on the Transportation and District Local Technical Assistance contracts.

For proposed revenues, Tom explained the revenue from EPA Brownfield, Community Development Block Grants and District Local Technical Assistance was included. Under expenditures, salaries increased due to pay scale changes, merit increases and the new planner position. Overall benefits increased slightly due to health and dental increases around 4%. Under operating expenses there is an increase for the replacement of Nat when he retires. BRPC plans to contribute \$45,000 towards Retirees Health Insurance. Also budgeted is \$15,000 for our reserve.

Kyle asked for a motion after there were no questions or discussion.

Sarah Hudson moved to approve the FY 2018 Budget for Berkshire Regional Planning Commission; seconded by Rene Wood. Unanimously approved.

X. Appointment to the Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority Board

Kyle asked the Commission to reappoint Lisa Sloan of Lee to the Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority Board.

James Mullen moved to reappoint Lisa Sloan of Lee to the Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority Board; seconded by Rene Wood. Unanimously approved with 1 abstentions.

XI. Report of the BRPC Nominating Committee – Officers for FY 2018

CJ Hoss reported the Nominating Committees nominations for the following slate of officers:

Chair	Kyle Hanlon
Vice-Chair	Sheila Irvin
Clerk	Marie Raftery
Treasurer	Charles Ogden

All four officers have agreed to serve another year. After July 1st at the next Commission meeting other nominations can be taken.

XII. Approval of Executive Committee Actions between March 16 and May 18, 2017

Sarah Hudson moved to approve all Executive Committee actions between March 16 and May 18, 2017; seconded by Rene Wood. Unanimously approved.

Kyle explained at the last Commission meeting Bob Bott from Mt. Washington requested the topic of increases in Health Care cost be reviewed. At the last Regional Issues and Executive Committee meetings it was decided this top is a state issue and too big of an issue for BRPC to taken on. Jim Lovejoy thanked BRPC taking the request under consideration.

Kyle announced the Flyer for input for BRPC's 5th Thursday Dinner and presentation on large scale solar. All questions, concerns or your interests should be sent to Tom Matuszko, tmatuszko@berkshireplanning.org.

XIII. Executive Director's Report

- A. MassDOT Capital Investment Plan 2018-2022 Berkshire Public Meeting – Tuesday, May 23rd, 6:30 p.m., MassDOT District 1, Lenox**
- B. Mass Association of Planning Directors Conference in Pittsfield – Thursday and Friday, June 15-16th, Crowne Plaza**
- C. 5th Thursday Dinner for Planning & Zoning Boards – June 29th, Large Scale Solar, Mazzeo's Ristorante, Pittsfield**
- D. District Local Technical Assistance – Status in State Budget for FY 2018**
Nat urged all to call or send emails to Senator Hinds and Senator Karen E. Spilka (D-Ashland), Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means the importance of DLTA funding. Rene Wood suggested copying Senator Rosenberg.

E. MassDOT Small Bridge Projects in Berkshires

F. Other - None

XIV. Adjournment

Jamie Mullen made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Sheila Irvin. Unanimously approved. Adjourned at 9:05 pm.

Materials distributed or presented during this meeting:

Meeting Agenda

Draft Meeting Minutes March 16, 2017

Draft Executive Meeting Minutes January 19, 2017

Draft Executive Meeting Minutes March 16, 2017

Berkshire MPO TIP 2018 to 2022 Project List

Memo Draft 2017 CEDs

Letter RE: H.1083 Subdivision Law and docket No 391

Letter RE: S 1993 Airports and docket 1993

Memo Proposed FY2018 Budget

FY 2018 Projected Revenues

FY 2018 Projected Expenditures

Memo and Letter Appointment to Berk County Reg Housing Authority Board

Approval of Executive Committee Actions Memo

Letter to MEPA on Hoosac Valley Rail Service Ext SEIR

Drug and Alcohol Free Work Place Policy

Personnel Pay Plan

Executive Director's Report

MassDOT Capital Investment Plan Public Meeting Schedule

2017 MAPD Annual Conference Pittsfield June 15 to 16

CEDs presentation

CEDs

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BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
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KYLE HANLON, Chair
SHEILA IRVIN, Vice-Chair
MARIE RAFTERY, Clerk
CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

NATHANIEL W. KARNS, A.I.C.P.
Executive Director

MEETING NOTICE

There will be a meeting of the

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

on Thursday, June 1, 2017, 4:00 p.m.
at the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Office
1 Fenn Street, Suite 201, Pittsfield, MA

AGENDA

- | | | |
|------|---|--------|
| I. | Call to Order & Open Meeting Law Statement | (4:00) |
| II. | Approval of Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting of May 4, 2017 * | (4:05) |
| III. | Financial Reports | (4:10) |
| | A. May Expenditures Report * | |
| | B. Accounts Receivable Report | |
| | C. Other | |
| IV. | Delegate & Alternate Issues | (4:15) |
| V. | Committee Reports | (4:20) |
| | A. Regional Issues Committee | |
| | B. Other | |
| VI. | Items Requiring Action * | (4:25) |
| | A. Approval of Berkshire County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy | |
| | B. Approval of Letter of Support for H.2932, An Act Establishing the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership | |
| | C. Approval to Submit Grant Application to Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources Affordable Access Regional Coordination Grant Program | |
| | D. Other | |

- VII. Executive Director's Report (4:40)
- A. Report on New Grants and Contracts
 - B. Status of District Local Technical Assistance, Community Compact, and Efficiency and Regionalization Programs in State Budget
 - C. Massachusetts Association of Planning Directors Annual Meeting – June 15-16, Crowne Plaza, Pittsfield
 - D. 5th Thursday Dinner for Planning & Zoning Boards – Topic is Large Scale Solar - June 29th, Mazzeo's Ristorante, Pittsfield
 - E. New Planning Board Member Training
 - F. Other
- VIII. Old Business (4:45)
- A. Executive Director Replacement Status Report
 - B. Other
- IX. New Business (4:50)
- A. Summer BRPC Meeting
 - B. 2017 Charles Kusik Award
 - C. Other
- X. Adjournment (4:55)

* Items Requiring Action

Attachment: Technical Assistance Report for April 2017

City and Town Clerks: Please post this notice pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 39, Section 23B

Executive Committee
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

June 1, 2017 Meeting

Name	Community or BRPC or Public
Marianne Smocek	BRPC
Mattie Harris	BRPC
Kyle Harlan	N. Adams -
Rogin Bolton	Williamstown
Cecile Wood	Sheffield
Chuck Ogden	Egremont
→ ANA HUDSON	Tyringham
Bill Compton	BRPC
John David	Adams

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KYLE HANLON, Chair
SHEILA IRVIN, Vice-Chair
MARIE RAFTERY, Clerk
CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

NATHANIEL W. KARNs, A.I.C.P.
Executive Director

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday,

June 1, 2017

**At the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Office
1 Fenn Street, Suite 201, Pittsfield, MA 01201**

I. Call to Order

A. The meeting is called to order at: 4:16 p.m.

Chair Kyle Hanlon started the meeting by reading a statement regarding the open meeting law. BRPC records all meetings. Others may record the meeting after informing the chair. Any documents presented must be left with the chair of the meeting.

B. Roll Call:

Kyle Hanlon, Chair
Chuck Ogden, Treasurer
John Duval, At Large
Roger Bolton, At Large

A quorum is present.

Others Present:

Sarah Hudson, Tyringham Alternate

Staff Present:

Nat Karns, Executive Director
Marianne Sniezek, Office Manager
Bill Compton, Senior Planner

II. Approval of Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting of May 4, 2017

Rene Wood moved to approve with modifications; seconded by Chuck Ogden. Unanimously approved.

III. Financial Reports

A. May Expenditure Report

Everyone reviewed the completed expenditure list for May.

Roger suggested the code and name of the funding source be added to the Expenditure Report. We will see what we can provide at the next meeting.

Rene Wood moved to approve the Expenditures as presented; seconded by Chuck Ogden. Unanimously approved

B. Accounts Receivable Report

Staff is continuing to follow up on aged receivables over 90 days. None of the aged receivables are at risk.

Nat explained North Adams will pay BRPC shortly. North Adams had to produce invoices to MassDOT after BRPC invoiced North Adams for the work. North Adams also had to submit some additional forms to get paid from MassDOT.

The CDBG invoices is a lengthy process to process claims in DHCD's system. Sheffield is not tardy on any of these invoices.

C. Other – None

IV. Delegate and Alternate Issues – None

V. Committee Reports

A. Regional Issues Committee – Nat explained there will be a meeting in mid-June to continue the review of the land use bills.

B. Other – None

VI. Items Requiring Action

A. Approval of Berkshire County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

The Executive Committee was authorized to give final approval to the 2017 Berkshire County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy by the full Commission. There were some comments and corrections suggested at the May 18th Commission meeting. Attached are the changes made which are also now reflected in the full document.

Bill Compton explained the public comment period and the next steps in the process. The CEDS was posted in the Berkshire Eagle and on BRPC website for public comment. BRPC received one public comment request for a copy of the CEDS, comments and edits from a member of the CEDS committee, a comment from a Commission member from Lenox as well as comments made at the Commission meeting on May 4, 2017. The list of projects has been updated by deleting projects that are complete and added the New England Log Home site. Bill also explained "Adaptive Reuse of Great Estates" has been added as a new category for large projects in the region. "Broadband for All" is another topic added to the CEDS document.

The next CEDS meeting will be next week to review all the comments and new categories.

The comments received, the proof of publication, proof of the announcement on BRPC website and BRPC's self-evaluation will be appendices to the CEDS. Also, the minutes from tonight's Executive Meeting will also be sent to Economic Development Administration (EDA).

All comments will also be inserted into the CEDS document as well.

John asked who is responsible to make sure the recommendations and ideas in the CEDS are implemented? The responsibility is the BRPC staff, the Executive Committee, the Commission and our Economic Development partners for example 1Bershire. Bill explained the CEDS is an ongoing five-year process and in the Annual Report investments in the county are tracked. The Commission approves the CEDS Annual Report.

This year each community will receive copies of the Annual CEDs Report. Another suggestion for improvement was raising awareness between Communities and other regional activities are that are happening with other organizations. Nat explained this is Bill's responsibility to be a liaison.

A motion was asked for the approval of the CEDs.

Chuck Ogden moved to approve the Berkshire County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy with modifications on behalf of the Commission; seconded by Rene Wood. Unanimously approved.

B. Approval of Letter of Support for H.2932, An Act Establishing the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership

The Executive Committee is requested to approve a letter supporting H.2932, the state legislation needed to create the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership. A presentation was made at the January Commission meeting on the Partnership. The City of North Adams and all towns within the Partnership area in the county have been approving similar letters and it seems to be appropriate for the Commission to also be on record in support. A draft letter and a copy of the legislation, which is sponsored by Rep. Kulik and co-sponsored by Sen. Hinds and Reps. Cariddi and Mark, are attached. For further information, contact Assistant Director Tom Matuszko at 442-1521, ext. 34 or tmatuszko@berkshireplanning.org.

Rene suggested a small modification and to copy Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) on the letter.

Chuck Ogden moved to approve the Executive Director to send the modified letter of support for H.2932, An Act Establishing the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership on behalf of the Commission; seconded by Rene Wood. Unanimously approved.

C. Approval to Submit Grant Application to Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources Affordable Access Regional Coordination Grant Program

The Executive Committee is requested to authorize the Executive Director to apply to DOER's new Affordable Access Regional Coordination Grant Program and to sign any resulting agreements or contracts. We are probably applying to DOER for this new program in order to build BRPC's capacity to serve as a resource to municipalities or other community-based organizations to increase energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities for low income housing in the county. This application will also provide training and education to local housing organizations and housing unit owners to promote access to affordable energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities, such as maximizing incentive and rebate programs and streamlining renewable projects such as community solar or third party solar PV. No match is required.

Nat explained this is a new grant program for energy efficiency and renewable energy programs that directly benefits the lower income population. In the past, the higher income population has received the benefits. No one knows how to deal with renters, landlords and a population that are struggling daily who cannot do simple improvements like installing insulation behind electrical outlets. The grant is available to Regional Planning Agencies and Council of Governments. The funding is approximately between \$500,000 to \$600,000. Nat believes the money is bond money. The grant is to figure out how to tackle the problem. Then BRPC would work with organizations to make the program work.

Rene Wood moved to approve the Executive Director to submit a grant application to DOER for the Affordable Access Regional Coordination Grant Program on behalf of the Commission; seconded by Chuck Ogden. Unanimously approved.

D. Other - None

VII. Executive Director's Report

A. Report on New Grants and Contracts

All three EPA Brownfields grant applications submitted in December were awarded funding for \$300,000 each:

- Regional Assessment
- Assessments in North Adams. BRPC will be the administer.
- Assessments in Great Barrington. BRPC will be the administer.

Also, Williamstown received funding for a clean-up grant for a project by Berkshire Housing Development Corp. We believe this is for the Photec Mill site for the affordable housing project. BRPC does not have anything to do with this project.

B. Status of District Local Technical Assistance, Community Compact, and Efficiency and Regionalization Programs in State Budget

As always seems to be the case, the State Senate has not funded the line item for the DLTA program (1599-0026), which also contains funding for the Community Compact and the Efficiency and Regionalization programs. The Governor's and House's budgets fully funded these items at \$2.8 million, \$2.0 million, and \$2.0 million respectively. As soon as the Budget Conference Committee is named, we will send you a request to educate the Conference Committee members regarding the importance of these programs to your communities and the region.

Nat stated he would get information out on who to contact for letters and emails to support these programs. Once again DLTA funding is a bargaining chip. Senator Adams Hinds did sign on to these funds.

C. Massachusetts Association of Planning Directors Annual Meeting – June 15-16, Crowne Plaza, Pittsfield

D. 5th Thursday Dinner for Planning & Zoning Boards – Topic is Large Scale Solar - June 29th, Mazzeo's Ristorante, Pittsfield

E. New Planning Board Member Training – Nat instructed if anyone knows of new planning board members to please send them to Shannon at szaleski@berkshireplanning.org.

F. Other – EPA Rest of River

Nat explained next Thursday there was going to be a public hearing with the Environmental Appeals Board in Washington DC for verbal arguments. EPA has stated in a memo from E. Scott Pruitt, EPA Administrator, there will be a 90-day stay and they are in negotiations with interested parties whether an agreement can be made. We are not aware of any discussions locally or at the state level. The attorney representing the five municipalities, opposed the delay before the 5 pm deadline. If the hearing had been held the EPA Administrator would not have had the authority to do this.

We do not know what the negotiation are about but know GE wants less dredging; a local landfill and GE wants to walk away from any future liability. We need to wait and see what happens then see if there are any legal actions that can be taken.

The EPA administrator also has removed anyone else from having any authority to make remedies on superfund sites.

VIII. Old Business

A. Executive Director Replacement Status Report

Kyle reported this is in a holding pattern until school gets out.

B. Other - None

IX. New Business

A. Summer BRPC Meeting

We will need a Summer Commission meeting in July or early August to vote on officers for FY 2018. The Regional Issues Committee should have a draft letter regarding the land use reform legislation and given the legislative calendar, it would be better to act on these as soon as possible. We will determine if there are one or two other agenda items to include.

Schedule of Meetings

Nat asked about scheduling the Executive Committee and Commission meetings. After a discussion, it was decided the following meetings would be held at BRPC on the following days:

- June 29, 2017 Thursday at 4 pm if an Executive Committee Meeting is needed.
- July 27, 2017 Thursday at 5:30 pm Commission Summer Meeting
- September 28, 2017 Thursday at 7 pm Commission Meeting

B. 2017 Kusik Award

It is not too soon to be considering possible recipients for the 2017 Charles Kusik Award. Nat informed all the form for nominations will be send soon.

Arbnb - Legislative hearing at Lenox Town Hall

Nat discussed the Legislative hearing at Lenox Town Hall on Monday will be about taxing and regulating temporary lodging like arbnb. Nat asked if BRPC should make an appearance?

Rene felt there was no position the Commission could take but thought BRPC should make an appearance and state the Commission has concerns on the issues of Arbnb but at this time we do not have a position. BRPC could provide comments in the future. BPRC could also thank representatives for coming.

Rene Wood moved to have Nat or Tom attend the Legislative Hearing on behalf of the Commission; seconded by Roger Bolton. Unanimously approved.

X. Adjournment

Chuck Ogden moved to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Kyle Hanlon. The meeting was adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

Materials distributed or presented during this meeting:

Agenda

Minutes

Check Registers

Aged Receivables

Executive Director's Memo

Technical Assistance Report

New Grants Received

2017 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Seeking Public Comment

Large Scale Solar Flyer

Modifications to draft Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy reflecting discussion at
5/18/2017 BRPC meeting
2017 Berkshire County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
Draft Letter Supporting H.2932, An Act Establishing the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership
H.2932, An Act Establishing the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership (Rep. Kulik, Sponsor; Sen.
Hinds, Reps. Cariddi and Mark, Co-Sponsors)
New Grants and Contracts received 5/4/2017 to 6/1/2017
2017 MAPD Annual Conference, Pittsfield June 15 to 16
Additional CEDs comments

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Executive Director

Berkshire Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee

Agenda

June 8, 2017 | 11:00 AM

BRPC | 1 Fenn Street | Pittsfield, MA 01201

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes (April 27, 2017)
3. Comments from the Public
4. Update on CEDS submittal process and timeline
5. Update on Economic Development District (EDD) submittal process and timeline
6. Main Street Program
7. Other Items
8. Scheduling of Next Meeting
9. Adjournment

City and Town Clerks: Please post this notice pursuant to M.G.L., Chapter 39, Section 23B

Berkshire Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee

Meeting Minutes

June 8, 2017 – 11:00 AM

Committee Members Present: Roger Bolton, Jill Sasso Curtis, Bonnie Galant, Keith Girouard, Nathan Haddad, Mike Nuwallie, Cynthia Pansing, Chris Rembold, Hope Sullivan, and Mike Hoffman

BRPC Staff Present: Nat Karns, Pat Mullins, Bill Compton

Mr. Karns opened the meeting at 11:07 AM

No comments from the public.

Minutes to the April 27, 2017 were reviewed, motion by Mr. Hoffman to approve, second by Mr. Girouard; the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Karns gave an update on the CEDS submittal process and timeline. Comments made by this committee and comments received by the public have been reviewed and incorporated into the document. Mr. Bolton submitted several comments. The CEDS was presented to the BRPC Commission for their review on May 18, 2017. The Commission made some additional suggestions and comments and referred the CEDS to the BRPC Executive Committee. On June 1, 2017, the Executive Committee approved the CEDS for submittal to the EDA. Once the entire package, (the CEDS document, comments received during the 30-day comment period, the agendas and meeting minutes for the CEDS Committee, BRPC Commission, and BRPC Executive Committee) have been assembled, they will be submitted to EDA along with an EDA checklist and self-evaluation form. When the CEDS is transmitted, we will ask EDA for their review and approval and we will ask EDA to designate the Berkshire Region as an Economic Development District (EDD).

The committee discussed how the CEDS document was used relative to projects listed in the CEDS. It was explained that the CEDS is a five-year planning document and not an application for grant funding. If specific projects were to go on to seek funding from EDA or some other funding source, the project detail would be much more robust and indicate any collaborative partners and other sources of funding. The CEDs is updated annually, and during this update period it is appropriate to add new projects that have come to light, or delete projects that have been completed or are no longer being pursued.

Most of the Regional Commissions in Massachusetts have the EDD designation. To achieve it you must demonstrate certain levels of economic distress in at least one of the communities within the region. The economic distress indicators are: 1) an unemployment rate that for the most recent 24-month period is one percentage point greater than the national average; or 2) per capita income 80% or less than the national level. We achieve unemployment in several communities, and low per capita income in North Adams and Pittsfield.

The committee expressed the feeling that some of our greatest economic distress may be in indicators other than the EDA's specific criteria, for example population loss, especially among young adults, is a chief concern for the Berkshire Region. The committee expressed a desire going forward to examine whether any of these distress indicators could or would reach a tipping point.

In order to obtain EDD designation, we must have a majority of the communities in the region support this effort. It was the sense of the committee that a one page informational letter should be sent to the appropriate chief elected official, whether that be the mayor or chair of the Selectboard, of each community explaining what EDD designation means and what the associated costs and benefits may be for the community. As this support is being obtained, staff will work with EDA to ensure proper documentation is submitted. Documentation has been submitted previously, but will need to be updated.

Mr. Rembold made a motion to proceed with seeking EDD designation, the motion was seconded by Ms. Pansing; the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Compton informed the committee he has had a discussion with Debra Boronski and Maria DiStefano with the Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD) about the introducing the National Main Street program to the Berkshires. This program has been very successful for several decades in small communities across the nation. In Massachusetts, the program is primarily centered around Boston, and not as active in the rest of the state. It seems like it would be a good fit for communities in the Berkshires with downtown main streets, such as Great Barrington, Lenox, and Williamstown; and communities that have expressed a desire to develop a main street, such as Lanesborough. These communities have expressed interest in learning more about the program.

The CEDS committee expressed an interest in the possibility of co-hosting an informational meeting with 1 Berkshires. Recognizing that successful Main Street programs have strong community partnerships, the committee recommended inviting municipal leaders and appropriate staff, local Chambers of Commerce, local Economic Development Corporations and Community Development Corporations, and institutions of higher learning. It was felt that a weekday meeting, possibly a morning meeting with coffee and Danishes, was strongly preferable to a meeting after 5PM. Staff will be in contact with the MOBD to work out the details and will keep the CEDS committee informed.

Next meeting to be scheduled for mid- to late-September.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:22PM.

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NATHANIEL W. KARNS, A.I.C.P.
Executive Director

MEETING NOTICE - Amended

A meeting of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
will be held on:

Thursday, September 28, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. at the BRPC Office
1 Fenn Street, Ste. 201
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Orientation for New Delegates & Alternates: There will be an orientation for new delegates and alternates from 6:00-6:50 p.m. All delegates and alternates are welcome to attend. We will have sandwiches and wraps – please let us know if you are planning on attending by emailing or calling Shannon Zaleski at 413-442-1521, ext. 10, or szaleski@berkshireplanning.org so that we can order enough food.

Meeting Material: All written materials for the meeting are posted on BRPC's website: www.berkshireplanning.org. Click on the calendar date for the meeting and materials available will be listed.

AGENDA

- I. Opening (7:00-7:05)**
- A. Call to Order
 - B. Roll Call
 - C. Approval of Minutes July 27, 2017 Meeting
- II. Comments from the Public (7:05-7:10)**
- Members of the public may offer comments regarding topics which are on the agenda or other matters which they wish to bring to the Commission's attention. Comments are limited to no more than three minutes and are to be directed to the Commission.*
- III. Delegates' Issues (7:10-7:15)**
- Delegates and Alternates may bring up any issue not on the agenda.*
- IV. Endorsement of Committee Chair and At-Large Executive Committee Member Appointments for FY 2018 (7:15-7:20)**

V. Final Approval of 2017 Berkshire Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Incorporating Comments from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (7:20-7:30)

The Economic Development Administration provided a small set of comments, non-substantive in nature, after review the CEDS which the Commission approved in June. These need to be incorporated into the document and we have been requested that the Commission formally approve this incorporation.

VI. Massachusetts Rural Policy Advisory Commission (7:30-8:05)

The Massachusetts Rural Policy Advisory Commission was created by legislation in 2015 and held its first meeting in June 2016. Over the past year, it has analyzed a lot of data to better understand the nature of “rural” communities in Massachusetts in order to start to build a work program for the future. The data will be presented at the BRPC meeting and we encourage the Commission members to provide their thoughts and reactions to it. This will inform the Berkshire’s representative to the RPAC (Executive Director Nat Karns) as he continues to work with the other RPAC members over the coming year.

VII. Community Compact (8:00-8:25)

The Community Compact was one of the first initiatives of the Baker Administration and is entering its third year. The first round of Community Compacts has resulted in noticeable improvements in municipal practices across a range of activities. Thirty cities and towns in Berkshire County are eligible to enter into new Community Compacts this fall. Assistant Director Tom Matuszko will present information on the updated program and the status of our cities and towns. Communities are limited to two commitments for the coming year and the program provides support across a wide range of options.

VIII. Land Use Planning Technical Assistance Grants (8:25-8:35)

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs has just released a solicitation for applications to its Land Use Technical Assistance Program, with applications due October 23rd. We believe this is a great opportunity for our communities to address deficiencies and desires they have to modernize their land use regulations. Information about the program can be found at: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/eea/land/fy-17-planning-assistance-rfr-iii>. We will have a brief discussion about the program and invite each delegate and alternate to come to the table with ideas their community might like to pursue.

IX. Approval of Executive Committee Actions between July 27 and September 28, 2017 (8:35-8:40)

X. Executive Director’s Report (8:40-8:45)

- A. New Staff at BRPC
- B. Passage of 40R Smart Growth Overlay District in Great Barrington
- C. BRPC Regional Issues Committee – Short Term Rental Legislation
- D. 2017 Moving Together Conference – September 28th, Boston Park Plaza Hotel
- E. BRPC Annual Meeting – Thursday, October 19th, Pittsfield Country Club
- F. Citizen Planner Training Collaborative Berkshire Workshops – Thursday, November 2nd and Thursday November 9th, BRPC
- G. Municipal ADA Grant Program
- H. DHCD Community Scale Housing Initiative
- I. Massachusetts Clean Energy Center Programs for Municipalities
- J. Congratulations to Sheffield and Washington on Division of Ecological Restoration Grants for Culvert Replacement Designs
- K. Other

XI. Adjournment

(8:45)

Other interested citizens and officials are invited to attend.

All times listed are estimates of when specific agenda items may be discussed.

City and Town Clerks: Please post this notice pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 39, Section 23B

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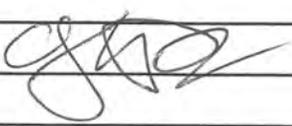
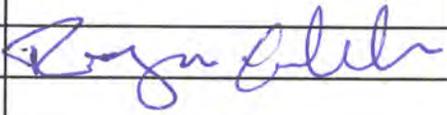
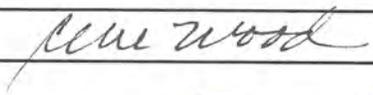
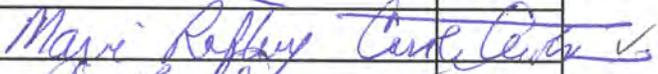
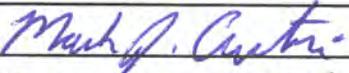
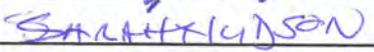
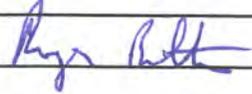
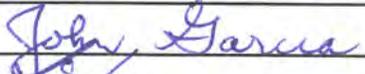
Alternate/Delegate please sign next to your name, Staff or Others sign at the bottom:

COMMUNITY	Last Name	First Name	D/A	Signature	28-Sep
ADAMS	Moderski	Sandra	D		
	Duval	John	A		
ALFORD	Glover	Alex	D		
	VACANT		A		
BECKET	Ronzio	Robert	D		
	Blake	Alvin	A		
CHESHIRE	Traub	Peter	D	<i>Peter Traub</i>	✓
	VACANT		A		
CLARKSBURG	Matys	Audrey	D		
	McKinney	Carl	A		
DALTON	Darby	Caleb	D		
	Holub	Edward	A	<i>Edward P. Holub</i>	✓
EGREMONT	Cherin	Gregory	D		
	Ogden	Charles	A		
FLORIDA	Oleson	Gabriel	D		
	Burdick	Glenn	A		
GT BARRINGTON	Fick	Malcolm	D		
	Rembold	Chris	A		
HANCOCK	Johnson	Blake	D		
	VACANT		A		
HINSDALE	Brown	Dan	D		
	VACANT		A		

Alternate/Delegate please sign next to your name, Staff or Others sign at the bottom:

COMMUNITY	Last Name	First Name	D/A	Signature	28-Sep
LANESBOROUGH	Tinkham	Ron	D		
	Hickey	Jack	A		
LEE	Donovan	Buck	D	<i>Buck Donovan</i>	✓
	Wickham	Thomas	A		
LENOX	Kueber	Pam	D	<i>P Kueber</i>	✓
	Fowler	Kenneth	A		
MONTEREY	Salomon	Pat	D		
	Basler	Kenn	A	<i>Ken Basler</i>	
MT WASHINGTON	Bott	Robert	D		
	Lovejoy	James	A	<i>John</i>	✓
NEW ASHFORD	Phelps	Mark	D		
	Flicker	Kevin	A		
NEW MARLBOROUGH	Mullen	James	D		
	Hardyman	Patricia	A		
NORTH ADAMS	Hanlon	Kyle	D	<i>Kyle Hanlon</i>	✓
	Bernstein	Larysa	A		
OTIS	Kobrin	Harold	D		
	Ernst	Michael	A		
PERU	Haupt	Sam	D		
	VACANT		A		
PITTSFIELD	Irvin	Sheila	D	<i>Sheila Irvin</i>	✓

Alternate/Delegate please sign next to your name, Staff or Others sign at the bottom:

COMMUNITY	Last Name	First Name	D/A	Signature	28-Sep
	Hoss	CJ	A		✓
RICHMOND	Ellis	Adeline	D		
	Vittori	John	A		
SANDISFIELD	Bottum Sr.	Gary	D		
	Kohler	Roger	A		✓
SAVOY	Tynan	John	D		
	LaBonte	Daniel	A		
SHEFFIELD	Smith	Kenneth	D		
	Wood	Rene	A		✓
STOCKBRIDGE	Raftery	Marie	D		✓
	Owens	Carole	A		✓
TYRINGHAM	Curtin	Mark	D		✓
	Hudson	Sarah	A		✓
WASHINGTON	Wiley	Marilyn	D		
	Case	Michael	A		
WEST STOCKBRIDGE	Bixby	Dana	D		
	Zick	Karen	A		
WILLIAMSTOWN	Jeschawitz	Amy	D		
	Bolton	Roger	A		✓
WINDSOR	Garcia	John	D		✓
	Crane	Timothy	A		✓
				TOTAL ATTENDING	0

Alternate/Delegate please sign next to your name, Staff or Others sign at the bottom:

COMMUNITY	Last Name	First Name	D/A	Signature	28-Sep
<i>BRPC Staff/ Other</i>	<i>Last Name</i>	<i>First</i>		<i>Signature</i>	
BRPC	Sniezek	Marianne		<i>Marianne</i>	
BRPC	Karns	Nat		<i>Nat</i>	
BRPC	Matuszko	Tom			
BRPC	Gaherty	Lauren			
BRPC	Kittross	Laura			
BRPC	Koirala	Anuja			
BRPC	Kus	Clete			
BRPC	Maloy	Mark			
BRPC	Compton	William			
BRPC	Mullins	Pat			
BRPC	Coughlin	Eammon			
BRPC	Provencher	Melissa			
BRPC					
BERKSHIRE EAGLE	LINSDAY	DICK			
I BERKSHIRE	MCKEEVER	ANDY			
I BERKSHIRE	DANIELS	TAMMY			
BERKSHIRE EAGLE	DENERS	PHIL			
WILLIAMSTOWN	SMERNOFF	PAUL			
PITTSFIELD	PARIS	JOHN			
LENOX	KETCHUM	CHRIS			

Citizen

Mitchell

Ralub

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KYLE HANLON, Chair
SHEILA IRVIN, Vice-Chair
MARIE RAFTERY, Clerk
CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

NATHANIEL W. KARNS
Executive Director

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

**Thursday September 28, 2017
At BRPC Office**

I. Call to Order

A. The meeting is called to order at 7:00 PM after the New Delegate and Alternate Orientation

Chair Kyle Hanlon reminded all per the open meeting law, BRPC records all meetings. Others may record the meeting after informing the chair. Any documents presented must be left with the chair at the meeting.

B. Introductions/Roll Call

The following Commission members are present:

Peter Traub – Cheshire Delegate
Edward Holub – Dalton Alternate
Buck Donovan – Lee Delegate
Pam Kueber – Lenox Delegate
Kenn Basler – Monterey Alternate
James Lovejoy – Mt. Washington Alternate
Kyle Hanlon – North Adams Delegate
Sheila Irvin – Pittsfield Delegate
CJ Hoss – Pittsfield Alternate
Roger Kohler – Sandisfield Alternate
Rene Wood – Sheffield Alternate
Marie Raftery – Stockbridge Delegate
Carole Owens – Stockbridge Alternate
Mark Curtin - Tyringham Delegate
Sarah Hudson – Tyringham Alternate
Roger Bolton – Williamstown Alternate
John Garcia – Windsor Delegate
Timothy Crane – Windsor Alternate

Staff Present:

Nathaniel Karns – Executive Director
Thomas Matuszko – Assistant Director
Marianne Sniezek – Office Manager
Patricia Mullens - Community and Economic Development Program Manager

Others Present:

Kate Fletcher – Stockbridge
Caleb Mitchell - Citizen

Kyle welcomed new members to the Commission.

C. Approval of Minutes July 27, 2017 Regular Meeting

Rene Wood moved to approve; seconded by Sheila Irvin. Unanimously approved with 3 abstentions.

II. Comments from the Public – None

III. Delegate & Alternate Issues

Rene Wood thanked BRPC for holding the Recreational Marijuana Workshop in Lenox. Tom informed everyone of the link on BRPC's website to view the recording of the workshop along with other material: <http://berkshireplanning.org/initiatives/marijuana-legalization>

BRPC was also thanked for their assistance to Lee on developing their 40R Zoning.

Kyle announced committees are looking for volunteers. Kyle also urged members to bring up issues and any topics you or community would like BRPC to present at upcoming Commission meetings or any training topics at 5th Thursday events.

The following people volunteered for the following committees:

Commission Development Committee

Carole Owens (Stockbridge)

Kate Fletcher (Non-Commission member)

Environmental Review Committee

Edward Holub (Dalton)

Regional Issues Committee

Pam Kueber (Lenox)

Finance Committee

Rene Wood (Sheffield)

IV. Endorsement of Committee Chair and At-Large Executive Committee Member Appointments for FY 2018

Rene Wood moved to endorse the Committee Chair and At-Large Executive Committee Member Appointments for FY 2018; seconded by Marie Raftery. Unanimously approved.

Kyle thanked previous Chairs Rene Wood of the Commission Development Committee and Marie Raftery of the Regional Issues Committee for their work on these committees.

V. Final Approval of 2017 Berkshire Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Incorporating Comments from the U.S. Economic Development Administration

The Economic Development Administration provided a small set of comments, non-substantive in nature, after reviewing the CEDS which the Commission approved in June. These need to be incorporated into the document and we have been requested that the Commission formally approve this incorporation.

Nat explained per EDA the additional information added was a cost instead of "to be determined" and funding sources to the CED's Strategy. None of the substance or projects in the CEDS was changed.

Nat asked for the Commission's approval of the added information to the supplemental material for October 2017 to October 2022 and to be submitted to EDA after the CEDS Committee approves.

Roger Bolton moved to endorse the Berkshire Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy incorporating the additional information based on comments from the U.S. Economic Development Administration and receive approval from the CEDS Committee for submission to EDA; seconded by Jim Lovejoy. Unanimously approved.

VI. Massachusetts Rural Policy Advisory Commission

The Massachusetts Rural Policy Advisory Commission was created by legislation in 2015 and held its first meeting in June 2016. Over the past year, it has analyzed a lot of data to better understand the nature of “rural” communities in Massachusetts in order to start to build a work program for the future. The data was presented. The Commission’s feedback will inform Berkshire’s representative to the RPAC (Executive Director Nat Karns) as he continues to work with the other RPAC members over the coming year.

Nat stressed the following:

Problems to Access Jobs:

- Lack of public Transit Services - distance to get to a job is a real problem in rural communities.
- Underserved by Broadband
- Access to Career Centers
- Public Higher Education – Berkshire Community College and Massachusetts Liberal Arts College

To Create Jobs the following is needed:

- Suitable locations with infrastructure to support business development. Such as having water and sewer systems
- Technical assistance to help entrepreneurs to develop a business.
- Community Development Corporations: Southern CDC, Pittsfield PERC, Franklin CDC
- Massachusetts Small Business Development Network
- Leverage opportunities in the community to develop businesses that attract customers (as well as prospective employees and other entrepreneurs). Opportunities might include: Natural assets – scenic landscapes and villages, outdoor recreation: farm & food systems; housing affordability; quality of life – culture and environment.

After Nat’s presentation he asked members for their suggestions on what is needed to access jobs and to create jobs.

Rene suggested high school entrepreneur programs and technical centers to help fill open positions. Pam asked for a list of the jobs needed to be filled. Train people for those jobs. Nat suggested Heather Boulger from Berkshire Regional Employment Board could provide a list of jobs available.

Pam from Lenox suggested a template for towns on what communities need to do when businesses are looking at their community. Most communities do not have an Economic Development Department but we need new entrepreneurs. Small businesses are what are most likely to come to our communities. Rene commented we need one stop shopping.

Nat suggested at a Commission Meeting inviting Jonathan Butler from 1berkshires and Ellen Kennedy, the President at Berkshire Community College, to speak to members on what they are doing.

Tom explained BRPC has a Shared Economic Planner in a few of our communities. A BRPC staff person works with the towns on local economic development needs as the town defines it. Lanesborough is looking at the possibilities for the Berkshire Mall with BRPC’s assistance. Also, Great Barrington and Hinsdale are taking advantage of the shared Economic Planner.

Ken Basler commented we need to know what is available and what is the vision. We need small businesses. Jim Lovejoy commented we need resources and money.

Rene commented the state needs to fund economic development, BRPC needs to ask for funding. Possibly a pilot program and have BRPC take the lead. Possible District Technical Assistance (DLTA) as a funding source. Ken mentioned Community Compacts as a funding source.

VI. Community Compact

The Community Compact was one of the first initiatives of the Baker Administration and is entering its third year. The first round of Community Compacts has resulted in noticeable improvements in municipal practices across a range of activities. Thirty cities and towns in Berkshire County are eligible to enter into new Community Compacts this fall. Assistant Director Tom Matuszko presented information on the

updated program and the status of our cities and towns. Communities are limited to two commitments for the coming year and the program provides support across a wide range of options.

Tom explained we are in year three of the Community Compact program. There is \$2 million dollars available this year as well as state expertise. Jim Lovejoy pointed out IT and Financial Services are examples of state expertise assistance. Tom encouraged everyone to look at the long list of Best Practices. To apply there is an easy online application that must be sign by the Chief Elected Official or the Select Board Chair. The key is each community can sign up for only two Best Practices. Tom pointed out on page 6 the Housing and Economic Development Best Practices. Ken Basler stated every town should be doing this. It is a way for your community to focus on your issues. Communities all will be approved for state expertise and grant money. Communities can also band together for a regional application.

VII. Land Use Planning Technical Assistance Grants

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs has just released a solicitation for applications to its Land Use Technical Assistance Program, with applications due October 23rd. We believe this is a great opportunity for our communities to address deficiencies and desires they have to modernize their land use regulations. Information about the program can be found at:

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/eea/land/fy-17-planning-assistance-rfr-iii>.

Tom explained this is a new grant program to looking at Zoning, Climate Vulnerability Assessments, Land Conservation and Climate Change.

You MUST SIGN UP for COMMUNITY COMPACTS to be more competitive for this grant application. Effectively the DUE DATE is October 20, 2017 because 4 paper copies must be received in Boston by October 23, 2017.

There is a 25% match requirement. DLTA can be match for planning or zoning.

The key to be more competitive is to do all three:

1. Community Compact
2. EEOA Land Use Planning
3. DLTA match

For a regional application letters of support would be needed. One possible regional application would be an Age Friendly housing options for seniors. If there is any interest please contact Tom at tmatuszko@berkshireplanning.org.

VIII. Approval of Executive Committee Actions between July 27 and September 28, 2017

Rene Wood moved to approve the Executive Committee Actions between July 27 and September 28, 2017; seconded by Marie Raftery. Unanimously approved.

IX. Executive Director's Report

A. New Staff at BRPC

Nat announced the newest additions to BRPC's staff due to more work:

Three new planners have been hired

1. Peg McDonough – Age Friendly Berkshires
2. Justin Gilmore – Transportation
3. Chris Gruba – Land use planning and Zoning

New staff to be hired in October

1. William Sikula – planner for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and other programs
2. BRPC will be making an offer for the Community Development Program Associate. The primary duties would be to work on housing rehab and with the homeowners. BRPC also will be starting two new CDBG programs in Becket and Monterey. Kenn Basler thanked Pat Mullins for her assistance with Monterey's CDBG program.

Other staff changes

Bill Compton is no longer with BRPC. There was a mutual agreement regarding Bill's departure. BRPC is actively recruiting and interviewing for an Economic Development Senior Planner.

- B. Passage of 40R Smart Growth Overlay District in Great Barrington**
- C. BRPC Regional Issues Committee – Short Term Rental Legislation**
- D. 2017 Moving Together Conference – September 28th, Boston Park Plaza Hotel**
- E. BRPC Annual Meeting – Thursday, October 19th, Pittsfield Country Club**
Kyle urged anyone who has not signed up yet should do so. Mr. Krens will be a dynamic speaker.
- F. Citizen Planner Training Collaborative Berkshire Workshops – Thursday, November 2nd and Thursday November 9th, BRPC**
- G. Municipal ADA Grant Program**
- H. DHCD Community Scale Housing Initiative**
- I. Massachusetts Clean Energy Center Programs for Municipalities**
- J. Congratulations to Sheffield and Washington on Division of Ecological Restoration Grants for Culvert Replacement Designs**
- K. Other**

Rene also thanked the Regional Issues Committee for their review of the Land Use Reform legislation.

Nat explained the Senate bill is the modernization of Massachusetts statues covering Master Planning and Zoning that has not been done since 1973. There are three versions that all need comments; Senate 81, House 2420 and the Real Estate Bill.

BRPC supports the concept of the first two bills and sent comments regarding S.81 An Act Promoting Housing and Sustainable Development. Below is the link to the letter posted on BRPC's website:

http://berkshireplanning.org/images/uploads/announcements/2017-09-25_S.81_Act_Promoting_Housing_and_Sustainable_Development_.pdf

X. Adjournment

Rene Wood made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Sheila Irvin. Unanimously approved. Adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Materials distributed or presented during this meeting:

Meeting Agenda
Draft Meeting Minutes
Approval of Executive Committee Actions Memo
Executive Director's Report
Endorsement of Committee Chair and At-Large Executive Committee Member Appointments
Rural Policy Advisory Commission General Law/Part 1/Title II/Chapter 23A/Section66 and power point
Massachusetts Rural Communities Map
Berkshire Community Compacts by Community and Best Practices
EOEEA Grant Announcement Planning Assistance
2017 Moving Together Conference
BRPC Annual Meeting
Municipal ADA Grant Program and Process and Deadlines
Massachusetts Clean Energy Center Programs for Municipalities and Clean Heating and Cooling for
Commercial and Industrial
CPTC Fall 2017 Workshops Flyer

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SHEILA IRVIN, Vice-Chair
MARIE RAFTERY, Clerk
CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

NATHANIEL W. KARNIS, A.I.C.P.
Executive Director

Berkshire Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee

Agenda

December 12, 2017 | 12:00 PM

BRPC | 1 Fenn Street | Pittsfield, MA 01201

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes (June 8, 2017)
3. Comments from the Public
4. Approval of final 2017 CEDS – supplemental material
5. Update on Economic Development District (EDD) submittal process and timeline
6. 2018 CEDS Progress Report planning
7. CEDS Project Update – Housatonic School in Great Barrington
8. Adjournment

City and Town Clerks: Please post this notice pursuant to M.G.L., Chapter 39, Section 23B

Please Note: In the case of inclement weather on the day of the meeting, please call BRPC at 413-442-1521, ext. 15 to confirm if the meeting is still being held.

Berkshire Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee

Meeting Minutes

December 12, 2017 – 12:00PM

Committee Members Present: Roger Bolton, Heather Boulger, David Curtis, Jill Sasso Curtis, Keith Girouard, Nathan Haddad, Beryl Jolly, Mike Nuvalle, Ian Rasch, Deanna Ruffer

BRPC Staff Present: Nat Karns, Pat Mullins, Laura Brennan

Mr. Karns opened the meeting at 12:08PM

Minutes from the June 8th, 2017 meeting were reviewed, motion by Mr. Nuvalle to approve, second by Ms. Boulger; the motion passed unanimously.

No comments from the public.

The group went around the room to make brief introductions.

The packet of supplemental content for the 2017 CEDS was reviewed. Ms. Brennan briefly described each section of the packet, all of which was additional information requested by the EDA. She also noted that the information had already been seen by EDA contacts and it was acknowledged that this supplemental information fulfilled their request, and should be incorporated into the full document. Ms. Brennan also informed the group that the Commission had already voted to approve incorporation of the supplemental content into the 2017 document.

Mr. Girouard asked about sources for the dollar figures in the cost column of the projects list. Mr. Karns explained that the numbers represented general estimates, and that they were expected to fluctuate during the course of each project's implementation. Application for funding for any individual project identified would not be held to these estimate numbers. The group discussed the mix of capital investments and ongoing programmatic items in the list. Mr. Bolton suggested that clarification may be needed regarding which were annual, as some on the list are ongoing but are not marked in that way. The committee recognized future opportunities to fine tune projects, costs, and potential funding sources during annual updates in 2018 and beyond. Ms. Boulger pointed out an error in her work address as listed. Ms. Ruffer provided a correction to the date on Ms. Galant's retirement. Mr. Girouard indicated a change was needed to his work address.

Ms. Boulger made a motion to approve the supplemental material as written, and to resubmit it to the EDA within a fully integrated final document. Mr. Bolton seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Brennan and Mr. Karns offered a summary of the Economic Development District process as discerned from their recent telephone call with Debra Beavin at the EDA. Ms. Brennan has received an updated checklist of steps for application, which Ms. Ruffer asked to have distributed to the members of the Strategy Committee. Mr. Bolton inquired as to whether there were any potential downsides to acquiring an EDD designation. Mr. Karns explained that

the primary challenge to be aware of is that any possible funding through the EDA would require a 1:1 match, and that other federal funds (with the exception of CDBG funding) are not eligible as a match. State and municipal funding, along with other private sources, would be considered eligible in achieving a match.

When the CEDS is transmitted, BRPC will ask EDA for their review and approval and we will begin the process of seeking EDA designation of the Berkshire Region as an Economic Development District (EDD). One criteria of designation is support from a majority of communities within the region, and Mr. Karns indicated that he has seen enthusiasm from municipal leaders to move forward in seeking designation.

Most of the regional planning agencies in Massachusetts have the EDD designation. To achieve it you must demonstrate certain levels of economic distress in at least one of the communities within the region. We meet the criteria in parts of Pittsfield and in North Adams.

Ms. Brennan reminded the group of necessary paperwork to keep on file with BRPC, and made hard copies available of what had previously been emailed. The group was asked to consider continuing their service on the Strategy Committee, and if they needed to step down to let BRPC staff know as soon as possible. The group will meet every other month during 2018, and a survey will be circulated to find the best dates and times of day for the majority of the group.

An update on the Housatonic School was provided from Mr. Rembold of Great Barrington, who was unable to attend in person but sent a written summary. The intention will be to include at least one such update at each future meeting of the Committee. The update was as follows:

The Town issued an RFP last spring to seek interested buyers or renters of the former elementary school, and one response were received this past August. The Town has entered into an Agreement with the Respondent Team, an alliance of community members who are willing to work with the Town for the next 12 months to determine the feasibility of a mixed-use project in the building. The Team is proposing two floors of commercial space (basement and first floor), with several entities including community health services and business incubators expressing interest in the space. The second floor would be small rental apartments. Specific build out costs, detailed designs, and financing still must be worked out over this 12-month period. If at the end of this period the Team has determined the project is feasible, the Town can enter into an agreement to sell or lease them the building.

In the meantime, the Town is continuing its commitment to addressing various barriers to redevelopment of the school. These include completing a CDBG-funded streetscape and parking design, and an EPA-funded Phase I and Phase II brownfield assessments. The results will be shared with the Team. Whether the Town or the Developer undertakes the parking and streetscape improvements and remediation will be determined as part of the feasibility process. Finally, lack of fiber optic internet is also viewed as a redevelopment barrier, and the Town is investigating how to bring fiber to the building.

Mr. Karns announced to the group that BRPC has been awarded a grant from the Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs for research of possible redevelopment of the Berkshire Mall. The group discussed some potential reuse plans. Mr. Girouard inquired as to the level of influence the committee or other interested parties may be able to influence the

eventual project. Mr. Karns shared that most reuse plans would require a rezoning of the parcel in question, and that this would provide the town of Lanesborough considerable ability to influence the outcome.

In the same round of grant announcements, awards were made to Pittsfield for revamping of downtown zoning, and to BRPC on behalf of Cheshire for zoning changes intended to increase housing opportunities, as well as a multi-community project for creating age friendly housing models.

Mr. Karns provided a brief summary of progress on the question of passenger rail from NYC into the Berkshires. Senator Hinds successfully filed a budget amendment for MassDOT to investigate the feasibility of a "Berkshire Flyer" service, which would run from Penn Station up the Hudson lines to the Albany Rensselaer station then east to Pittsfield. Participants in the working group are looking at numbers to see how many passengers and at what fare would be needed to make this viable, aided by zip code analysis of second-home and short-term rental origins provided by BRPC.

Ms. Ruffer shared an update on the Berkshire Innovation Center (BIC). The City of Pittsfield has recently committed \$1 Million toward a capital gap, based on a verbal commitment from the Commonwealth for \$2 Million, ostensibly closing any remaining gap and allowing for possible Spring groundbreaking. Discussion occurred regarding the possibility that this project may not be subject to typical municipal procurement procedures, and may be managed privately rather than be publicly bid.

Having no further items to discuss, the group adjourned at 1:29PM.

Next meeting to be scheduled for early 2018.

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APPENDIX III – CEDS REVIEW & ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

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COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDs) REVIEW & ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST (for EDA-funded CEDs)

Planning Organization Information

Name:	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Address:	1 Fenn Street, Suite 201, Pittsfield, MA 01201
POC Name, Title:	Nathaniel Karns, Executive Director
POC Telephone, Email:	413-442-1521, ext. 26, nkarns@berkshireplanning.org

Organizational Review & Approval Process (to be completed by Organization)

Strategy committee roster included/attached:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Copy of CEDs provided to affected Regional Commission:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA
Dates of public review & comment period (at least 30 days):	5/3/17 – 6/1/17
Date CEDs adopted by organization's governing body:	6/1/17
Attached documentation of public comment and adoption:	
• Governing body adoption of CEDs (minutes or resolution):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
• Verification of 30-day public comment on the CEDs:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
• Copy of all public comments received on the CEDs:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
• Explanation from the Planning Organization stating how comments were incorporated into the final CEDs:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
CEDs self-assessment checklist completed & attached (optional):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

EDA Review & Approval Process (to be completed by EDA)

Reviewer Name, Title, RO:	
Reviewer Phone, Email:	
Date CEDs Received by EDA:	
Date CEDs Review Completed:	
CEDs Review Determination:	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Deficient
Date CEDs Review Letter & Checklist Sent to Organization:	
CEDs, Review Letter, & Assessment Checklist Filed at RO:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
CEDs Receipt, Review Notification, & Status Entered in OPCS:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS) REVIEW & ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST (for EDA-funded CEDS)

Overview

“A CEDS is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development. A CEDS is the result of a regionally owned planning process designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of an area or region.” This definition comes from the “Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Content Guidelines: Recommendations for Creating an Impactful CEDS,” published by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) in 2015. It frames the nature and purpose of a CEDS. The checklist below is an optional assessment tool intended to help area/regional development organizations prepare viable strategies that meet EDA’s guidelines. Likewise, it is a tool for EDA staff to use in reviewing and approving a CEDS. Although it is not a required form, it is a useful tool.

Structure

The checklist follows the structure of EDA’s CEDS guidelines. The assessment elements relate to the stated requirements and recommendations contained in the guidelines. **Requirements, which are noted as such, are few. Most of the elements are recommendations.**

Instructions

The following instructions will optimize the use of this checklist for CEDS reviews and self-assessments:

- Check the appropriate box to indicate whether or not the element is present and has been satisfactorily addressed. For certain elements not applicable to the area/region, indicate “NA.”
- Where requested, note the location of the element in the CEDS by showing the section or page number(s) where the topic is addressed.
- Include comments to clarify the review, as needed, or to indicate deficiencies to be addressed, or to acknowledge exemplary treatment of the element.

Self-Assessment

It will be helpful for a CEDS-preparing organization to conduct a self-assessment of its strategy using this CEDS checklist. In so doing, the organization should be able to identify and address deficiencies prior to submitting the document for EDA review and approval. It will also be helpful for the organization to submit a copy of its self-assessment with its CEDS.

References

“Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Content Guidelines: Recommendations for Creating an Impactful CEDS,” <http://www.eda.gov/ceds/>

EDA Regulations: 13 C.F.R. § 303.7; http://www.eda.gov/pdf/edas_regs-13_cfr_chapter_iii.pdf

CEDS REVIEW & ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

1. OVERVIEW

In accordance with EDA’s regulations and guidelines, the following sections must be included in the CEDS document:

Summary Background	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See pages 1-23
SWOT Analysis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See pages 26-38
Strategic Direction/Action Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See pages 44-50
Evaluation Framework	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See page 51, Performance Measures

Comments:

The CEDS must incorporate the concept of economic resilience (i.e. the ability to avoid, withstand, and recover from economic shifts, natural disasters, the impacts of climate change, etc.)

The CEDS meets this requirement.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See pages 39-41
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Comments:

2. CONTENT

The CEDS meets the following general criteria:

It was developed with broad-based community participation.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	
It is readily accessible to regional stakeholders.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	Available from BRPC in person, by mail, or online at www.berkshireplanning.org (Include website, if posted)
It is usable to stakeholders as a guide to the regional economy and for action to improve it.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	
Seen through the lens of economic resiliency, the four required elements (see	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	

'Overview' above) logically build upon each other to result in a coherent, targeted document.

Comments:

2-A. SUMMARY BACKGROUND

The "Summary Background" section meets the following criteria:

Answers the question, "Where have we been?" and presents a clear understanding of the local economic situation, supported by current, relevant data. Yes No

The information is presented in a clear and concise manner, and can be easily understood by the general public. Yes No

Data presentation allows for clear, relevant connections to the SWOT analysis and strategic direction. Yes No

Comments: The "Summary Background" describes the region and its economy and uses this information to develop the SWOT analysis.

The "Summary Background" section provides information in the following areas that affect the regional economy, as applicable:

Demographic & socioeconomic data	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location: <input type="checkbox"/> NA	See pages 4-11
Environmental, geographic, climatic, and cultural information	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location: <input type="checkbox"/> NA	See pages 1-3
Infrastructure assets that relate to economic development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location: <input type="checkbox"/> NA	See pages 21-23
Emerging or declining clusters or industry sectors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location: <input type="checkbox"/> NA	See pages 12-18
Relationship of the area's economy to the larger region or state	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location: <input type="checkbox"/> NA	Comparisons to the state and nation, and to the immediately surrounding regions are made throughout the CEDS.

Factors that directly affect economic performance in the area (e.g. workforce, innovation assets, industry supply chains, etc.)

Yes No
Location:
 NA

Summary of Economic Conditions and SWOT analysis generally, see pages 4-38; workforce innovation, see Exec. Summary, Goal 2 (p. ii), and Projects – Berkshire Innovation Center (p. v and 52)

Other factors that relate to economic performance (e.g. housing, health services, etc.)

Yes No
Location:
 NA

Housing, see pages 19, 29

Comments:

The CEDS includes content that meets the following related criteria:

It is a vehicle that promotes the integration of economic development with other regional plans (e.g. sustainability, transportation, land use, housing, environmental protection, etc.)

Yes No
Location:

See page 39-41

It identifies opportunities for the integrated use of local, state, private, and federal funds.

Yes No
Location:

See page iv and Goal 2 (p. ii) re: state and federal funds and public/private investment

The research for the CEDS includes a review of the long-term trends of the area.

Yes No
Location:

See pages 4-22

Comments:

2-B. SWOT ANALYSIS

The “SWOT Analysis” (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Strengths) section meets the following criteria:

Answers the question, “Where are we now?” and identifies the critical internal and external factors that speak to the region’s unique assets and competitive positioning.

Yes No

Considers economic resiliency, specifically, factors that can ensure the long-term success, viability, and durability of the regional economy.

Yes No
Location:

See page 39-41

Comments:

The “SWOT Analysis” assesses a wide-variety of regional attributes and dynamics, including the following specific areas and tools:

State of the regional economy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See pages 26-33
Regional clusters	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See pages 27
External trends and forces	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See page 37-38
Workforce considerations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See pages 27, 30-32
Spatial efficiencies/sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Location:	
Broadband needs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See page 30
Energy needs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See pages 30
Natural hazards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See pages 39-41
Equitable development	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Location:	
Partners for economic development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See pages 32, 49, 52
Resources for economic development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See pages 23-24, 32, 37, 39, 41, 48

Comments:

2-C. STRATEGIC DIRECTION/ACTION PLAN

The “Strategic Direction/Action Plan” section meets the following criteria:

Answers the questions, “Where do we want to go?” and “How are we going to get there?” by applying the SWOT analysis.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Includes a vision statement, goals, and objectives.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See pages 44-46
Includes an action plan for the implementation of the stated vision, goals, and objectives.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See pages 47-50

Comments:

The Vision Statement, Goals, and Objectives meet the following criteria:

They respond to the analysis of the area’s development potential and problems (i.e. SWOT analysis).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See pages 44-46
The process used to create the vision statement involved broad community participation.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See pages 44-46
The draft vision statement was widely circulated for review and comment to ensure maximum stakeholder engagement.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See pages 44-46
The goals are statements of broad outcomes and general intentions that build upon the vision statement.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See pages 44-46
The goals reflect the desires of most regional stakeholders, are realistic, and are limited to a manageable number.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See pages 44-46
The objectives are specific, measurable, concrete, and support the attainment of the stated goals.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See pages 44-46
The goals and objectives are prioritized, with consideration for the factors outlined in the CEDS guidelines.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See pages 44-46

Comments:

The Action/Implementation Plan meets the following criteria:

It <u>must</u> be clearly linked to the prioritized goals and objectives stated in the framework for strategic direction.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
It identifies and describes a limited number of key projects with the highest priority and potential for regional impact.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See linkage between Goals 1-6 (pages 44-46) and Action Plan Goals 1-6 (pages 47-50)

Comments:

The Action/Implementation Plan describes explicitly how the region will work together to achieve its goals and measurable objectives by including the following elements:

An outline of the steps required to take each selected high-priority activity from inception to successful completion.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See pages 47-50
A roster of the key individuals and institutions that will be responsible for implementing and supporting these steps.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See pages 47-50
A reasonable estimate of the costs associated with implementing the activity.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Location:	Will be determined as part of the 1 st Year update
A list of the integrated funding sources (public, private, non-profit) to support the costs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	Will be determined as part of the 1 st Year update
A realistic time frame for execution (i.e. implementation schedule), with relevant benchmarks and performance measures that address overall impact.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	Typically, ongoing, See pages 47-50
The identification of prioritized activities includes broad-based participation from regional stakeholders, including those affected by the proposed activities and those that can ensure their success.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	Primary and secondary responsible entities have been designated for each action under each goal

Comments:

2-D. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The “Evaluation Framework” section meets the following criteria:

It answers the questions, “How are we doing?” and “What can we do better?” by applying the SWOT analysis.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
It cascades from the strategic direction and action plan.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Performance measures are identified to evaluate the progress of activities in achieving the vision, goals and objectives.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location:	See page 51

Performance measures go beyond job creation to address linkages to other important factors, such as conditions the region needs to reverse or create, and what regional assets can be leveraged.

Yes No
Location:

See page 51

Comments:

2-E. ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

The “Economic Resilience” section addresses the following two approaches in harmony with the principles outlined in EDA’s CEDS Content Guidelines:

“Steady State” Initiatives: Planning for and implementing resilience through specific goals or actions to bolster the long-term economic durability of the region.

Yes No
Location:

See pages 39-43

“Responsive” Initiatives: Establishing information networks among the various stakeholders in the region to encourage active and regular communications between the public, private, education, and non-profit sectors. The “Economic Resilience” section demonstrates how the region serves as a source of information to deal with an economic challenge and a convener of regional stakeholders to gather data and encourage collaboration in the post-disruption stage.

Yes No
Location:

See pages 39-43

Comments:

3. FORMAT

The structure and presentation of the information in the CEDS takes the following factors into consideration:

Keeps the audience in mind with respect to the length of the document, the presence of an executive summary, the placement of supporting data, etc.

Yes No

Communicates creatively by having a professional and appealing look and feel, by including attractive and informative graphics and photos, and by using both hard-copy and electronic formats.

Yes No

Thinks beyond the document by finding ways to use it to engage stakeholders in meaningful conversations, and to leverage its relevance and use through social media.

Yes No

Comments: The 2017 CEDS is available in print and on the BRPC website and can be transmitted electronically, or by hard copy, upon request.

4. PREPARATION

The preparation of the CEDS included the following key steps and elements:

A strategy committee, which broadly represents the main economic interests of the region, was formed to facilitate the planning process, and to develop and update the CEDS.

Yes No
Location:

The CEDS documents how the planning organization collaborated with its diverse set of stakeholders in the formation of its strategy committee and the development of the CEDS.

Yes No
Location:

The planning organization has or will collaborate with EDA and other entities funded by EDA (e.g. University Centers, Economic Development Districts, Tribes) on the development and implementation of the CEDS.

Yes No
Location:

BRPC works collaboratively with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and other CEDS and EDD organizations within the state

Comments: