



# SUSTAINABLE BERKSHIRES

*Status Report – January 2019*



# Sustainable Berkshires Process

- ▶ Plan adopted March 2014
  - ▶ Result of 3 Years of Work
  - ▶ Hundreds of Citizens Participated
  - ▶ Key Stakeholders Participated in Multiple Working Meetings to Craft
  - ▶ Eight Elements of Plan
- 



# Eight Sustainable Berkshires Elements

- ▶ Conservation & Recreation
  - ▶ Economy
  - ▶ Food & Agriculture
  - ▶ Climate & Energy
  - ▶ Housing & Neighborhoods
  - ▶ Historic Preservation
  - ▶ Infrastructure & Services
  - ▶ Land Use
- 



# Sustainable Berkshires

- ▶ 80 Goals
- ▶ 137 Policies
- ▶ 352 Strategies

**Ambitious Plan!**





# Overall Report Card – After 4 Years

- ▶ 352 Total Strategies across 8 Elements
- ▶ 79 Strategies – Solid Progress or Complete - 22%
- ▶ 111 Strategies – Initiated or In Progress - 32%
- ▶ 162 Strategies – No Progress or Unknown - 46%

Uneven Levels of Implementation Across Elements

Many Implementation Actions are Responsibility of Others



# Conservation & Recreation Element

- ▶ 10 Goals
- ▶ 22 Policies
- ▶ 49 Strategies

Solid Progress or Complete	-	17	(35%)
Initiated or in Process	-	7	(14%)
No Progress or Unknown	-	25	(51%)



# Conservation & Recreation

## Notable Progress

- ▶ Partnerships across boundaries
- ▶ Permitting for Clean-up of Housatonic River
- ▶ Regional Bike Path and Complete Streets
- ▶ Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership

## Key Lack of Progress

- ▶ Rate of Community Preservation Act Adoption
- ▶ Increased funding for State Open Space Management



# Economy Element

- ▶ 13 Goals
- ▶ 19 Policies
- ▶ 55 Strategies

Solid Progress or Complete	-	14	(25%)
Initiated or in Process	-	22	(40%)
No Progress or Unknown	-	19	(35%)



# Economy

## Notable Progress

- ▶ Collaborative Approach to Education (BCETF)
- ▶ Broadband in Unserved Towns
- ▶ Progress on Rail and Freight Connections
- ▶ Start of dealing with Public Transportation issues

## Key Lack of Progress

- ▶ Clearly articulating regional economic development strategy
- ▶ Implementing “real” Broadband in economic centers
- ▶ Reaching young people to increase career aspirations



# Food & Agriculture Element

- ▶ 6 Goals
- ▶ 8 Policies
- ▶ 15 Strategies

Solid Progress or Complete - 2 (13%)

No Progress or Unknown \*\* - 13 (87%)

\*\* Area in which BRPC is much less involved and has not actively tracked what is happening



# Food & Agriculture

## Notable Progress

- ▶ Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership
- ▶ Right to Farm Bylaws
- ▶ Local Agriculture Commissions

## Key Lack of Progress

- ▶ Building local agriculture infrastructure – slaughter facility, county-wide food hub, commercial kitchens



# Climate & Energy Element

- ▶ 7 Goals
- ▶ 12 Policies
- ▶ 36 Strategies

Solid Progress or Complete	-	8	(22%)
Initiated or in Process	-	9	(25%)
No Progress or Unknown	-	19	(53%)



# Climate & Energy

## Notable Progress

- ▶ Green Communities adoption & implementation
- ▶ Emergency planning for Vulnerable Populations
- ▶ Increased awareness of vulnerability of Culverts and Bridges

## Key Lack of Progress

- ▶ Working proactively to identify Renewable Energy sites and standards
- ▶ Improving Public Transportation to reduce automobile use
- ▶ Identification of Vulnerable Populations to reach in emergencies



# Housing & Neighborhoods Element

- ▶ 10 Goals
- ▶ 26 Policies
- ▶ 71 Strategies

Solid Progress or Complete	-	17	(24%)
Initiated or in Process	-	26	(37%)
No Progress or Unknown	-	28	(39%)



# Housing & Neighborhoods

## Notable Progress

- ▶ Age Friendly Berkshires
- ▶ Public Health Alliance
- ▶ 40R Zoning in Great Barrington, Lee and Pittsfield
- ▶ Increased Involvement by Under-represented Populations
- ▶ Development of Solid Regional Housing Rehabilitation Program

## Key Lack of Progress

- ▶ Increased funding for Public Transportation
- ▶ Public Safety issues
- ▶ Limited progress on Workforce Housing and Existing Housing Conditions



# Historic Preservation Element

▶ 11 Goals

▶ 14 Policies

▶ 27 Strategies

Solid Progress or Complete - 3 (11%)

Initiated or in Process - 4 (15%)

No Progress or Unknown \*\* - 20 (74%)

\*\* Historic Preservation suffers from very weak financial support at local, state, and federal levels



# Historic Preservation

## Notable Progress

- ▶ Creation of Western Massachusetts Historic Commission Collaborative
- ▶ 6 Cities/Towns adopted Community Preservation Act

## Key Lack of Progress

- ▶ Updated Historic Preservation Surveys

# Infrastructure & Services Element

- ▶ 10 Goals
- ▶ 19 Policies
- ▶ 54 Strategies

Solid Progress or Complete	-	9	(17%)
Initiated or in Process **	-	31	(57%)
No Progress or Unknown	-	14	(26%)

\*\* Many strategies in this element are very complex and can take years to evolve towards solid progress (and typically are never complete)



# Infrastructure & Services

## Notable Progress

- ▶ Planning to respond to Climate Change
- ▶ Increased State Education Aid Funding
- ▶ Increased focus on need for Public Transportation
- ▶ Berkshire County Education Task Force
- ▶ Last Mile Broadband

## Key Lack of Progress

- ▶ Restructure of Education Related State Funding
- ▶ State Transportation Finance levels
- ▶ Increase Revenue Options for Local Governments
- ▶ Emergency Services Staffing needs



# Land Use Element

- ▶ 13 Goals
- ▶ 17 Policies
- ▶ 45 Strategies

Solid Progress or Complete	-	9	(20%)
Initiated or in Process	-	12	(27%)
No Progress or Unknown	-	24	(53%)



# Land Use

## Notable Progress

- ▶ New Master and Open Space & Recreation Plans
- ▶ Planning Education held in region
- ▶ Apparent possible progress on Zoning Reform
- ▶ Adoption of 40R and 43D Districts

## Key Lack of Progress

- ▶ Updating 40+ year-old Zoning Bylaws & Subdivision Regs
- ▶ Increased use of enhanced tools such as 40R and 43D
- ▶ Creation of Priority Development & Conservation Plan with State
- ▶ Enhanced Inter-municipal Land Use Cooperation



# Sustainable Berkshires – Status Report

- Questions?
  - Reactions?
- 