

U.S. Rep. Olver Announces FY '05 Berkshire Earmarks

In the FY '05 omnibus Congressional spending bill passed Nov. 20, 2004, U.S. Rep. Olver secured several significant earmarks for Berkshire planning projects:

- \$200,000 for The Nature Conservancy's Weed-It-Now anti-invasive species program (its 4th consecutive year of federal funding)
- \$100,000 to investigate, design and permit necessary repairs to Windsor Reservoir after severe storm damage in 2003
- \$140,000 for scenic and historic preservation on the Mohawk Trail for structures eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, such as the overnight cabins at the Summit and the souvenir shop at the Hair Pin Turn
- \$160,000 for a proposed Berkshire Environmental Resources Center at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA)
- \$194,000 to redevelop the New England Log Homes brownfield site in Great Barrington, creating 100,000 ft.² of local office, retail and light industrial space in the heart of the downtown.

BRPC and others throughout the region greatly appreciate the Congressman's conscientious work on the House Appropriations Committee. *Contact: Nat Karns*

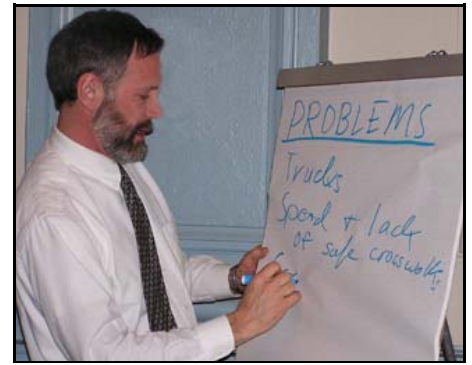
Berkshire Smart Growth Workshop: Foy Urges Consideration of Regional TDR

Approximately 80 local and state officials, economic development and business representatives, and other citizens attended the 12/10 Berkshire Smart Growth Workshop at Hancock Shaker Village. Secretary of Commonwealth Development Doug Foy and Deputy Secretary Steve Burrington were the headliners. Secretary Foy discussed the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles and the Commonwealth Capital Initiative. He encouraged the region to consider how its current growth pattern of rural sprawl is affecting its communities, quality of life and economy. He recommended that the Berkshires pursue innovative approaches to development, such as a region-wide transfer of development rights (TDR) program. TDR—and possible application regionally—will be the topic of training at the January full Commission meeting. Stay tuned for further developments! *Contact: Nat Karns*

Pictometry Software Delivered to Berkshire Towns

Pictometry software and images have finally been released by the state and are being delivered to requesting Berkshire communities. The software allows users to view high-resolution digital color aerial images of a community from an oblique angle perspective, which enables novel digital measurements, notably of structure heights. The

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At the drawing board: Executive Director Nat Karns facilitated a break-out session at the South Street Alternatives public meeting December 13th.

South Street Alternatives Meeting A Success

BRPC's 12/13 public meeting on South Street Alternatives at the Masonic Temple in Pittsfield attracted more than 80 stakeholders, including elected officials such as Mayor Ruberto and several City Councilors, MassHighway engineers, bike/ped advocates, South Street business owners and neighborhood residents. Following Andrew Lenton and Anuja Koirala's technical presentation, attendees broke into four groups to brainstorm problems and solutions.

The meeting will air on Time-Warner Channel 18 in January. Also, see berkshireplanning.org for related publications, project updates and a public web forum. *Contact: Andrew Lenton or Anuja Koirala*

Lenox Woods: 40B On Rise in Berks?

Many Berkshire communities wrestled with affordable housing in their Community Development Plans, often confronting the alternately frightening and freeing Chapter 40B. The 1969 statute encourages affordable housing development by allowing ZBAs to grant "Comprehensive Permits" overriding local zoning if at least 20-25% of the proposed units have long-term affordability restrictions.

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CALENDAR

January 5	Executive Committee Meeting	3:30 PM	BRPC
January 6	Pictometry Training Workshop	10:00 AM	BRPC
January 18	Pictometry Training Workshop	1:00 PM	BRPC
January 20	BRPC Full Commission Meeting	7:30 PM	BRPC
January 22	HCI: Land Trust "Boot Camp"	9:30 AM	Leominster
January 29	HCI: Conservation Restrictions	9:30 AM	Monterey
February 2	Executive Committee Meeting	3:30 PM	BRPC

Pictometry (continued from page 1)

software and images are only available to municipal employees and board members. Software trainings will be offered at BRPC on January 6th at 10:00 a.m. and again on January 18th at 1:00 p.m. For additional information on pictometry or training registration, *contact Mark Maloy.*

Southern Berkshire Community Transit Study

BRPC is conducting a Southern Berkshire Community Transit Study to better understand the transportation needs of non-drivers in South County. In connection with the study, BRPC is updating the inventory of all transportation services available in the southern Berkshires. Surveys of the sub-region's transportation needs, collected in summer and fall 2004, are now being analyzed. A public meeting will be held in early February to discuss the survey findings and to gather additional public input. Stay tuned for the upcoming meeting announcement. *Contact: Anuja Koirala*

Road Surface Management Survey (RSMS) Services Available

Trying to make the most of limited road budgets and personnel? BRPC will inventory conditions of all town roads, paved or unpaved, and estimate costs for prioritized maintenance alternatives on a fee for service basis. *Contact: Andrew Lenton*

40B (continued from page 1)

Great Barrington's 2003 Blue Hill Commons was the Berkshires' first controversial 40B project. In 2004, Stockbridge issued a 40B permit for the Pine Woods development, and now Lenox is considering one. As proposed, Lenox Woods would be the region's first 100% affordable housing project. Its 96 units would make Lenox the second Berkshire community to pass the state's 10% affordable housing goal. DHCD offers technical assistance grants for communities facing 40B; BRPC has recently received funding to assist Lenox. *Contact: Joellyn Warren*

2006-2010 TIP Development

BRPC will meet with town managers, DPW directors, MassHighway, and BRTA in January and February to begin preparing the 2006-2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the prioritized list of Berkshire transportation projects selected to receive federal funding over the next five years. Using evaluation criteria introduced last year, BRPC will guide proponents submitting information for project scoring. BRPC's Transportation Committee will consider the scores in recommending a draft TIP to the full Commission. Public input will be important throughout. A formal 30-day comment period will be advertised before final approval by the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), scheduled for August. *Contact: Andrew Lenton*

Berkshire Goods Movement Study

Obstacles to the efficient movement of goods into, out of, and within the Berkshires represent a challenge to the region's economic growth and sustainability. Many Berkshire businesses contend with inefficient product routes or less than optimal delivery access, which can often lead to community and environmental stresses, such as heavy localized traffic or pollution. BRPC will survey the region's major businesses by mail this January, gather further information from state and federal agencies and other stakeholders, and do relevant data analysis for a report due April 2005. The findings will serve as the basis of a plan to improve Berkshires goods movement. *Contact: Andrew Lenton or Ravi Wijesundera*

Clearinghouse Reviews

Berkshire Wind Power Project NPC Comments (10/29/04)
Richmond Pond Sewer Extension Permit Comments (11/7/04)
The Range ENF Comments (11/12/04)
Ashmere Lake Stormwater Remediation ENF Comments (11/12/04)
Lenox Woods Affordable Apartments ENF Comments (11/30/04)
Contact: Melissa Jette

E-mailing BRPC Staff?

Use first initial and last name (all lower-case) followed by @berkshireplanning.org.