

## OCD Sec. Foy & EOED Sec. Kimball To Visit Berkshires

Secretary of Commonwealth Development Doug Foy and Secretary of Economic Development Ranch Kimball will discuss the Commonwealth's "Smart Growth" policies and how they might affect the Berkshires at Hancock Shaker Village on Friday, December 10<sup>th</sup> (not the 3<sup>rd</sup>, as reported in some previous notices). Registration will begin at noon, with the program and a light lunch beginning promptly at 12:30. Space is limited, so prompt registration is advised. For registration information email [Lauren.curtis@state.ma.us](mailto:Lauren.curtis@state.ma.us) with your name, organization, address and phone number, specifying the "Berkshire 12/10 meeting." *Contact: Debbie Polito*

## Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning

BRPC is developing a Regional Hazard Mitigation plan that maps previous Berkshire County natural disasters (e.g. floods, tornados, severe storms) and discusses ways to minimize impacts from such hazards in the future. While consisting of region-wide information, the plan will include specifics for each community in the county. These plans are now a requirement for communities seeking access to certain FEMA grant funds. BRPC staffers Mark Maloy and Lauren Gaherty will be contacting local Emergency Management Directors and DPW Supervisors to verify historic data and to collect local, town-specific information. A draft Plan is expected by the end of November. Members of the public wishing to comment on the draft, please contact *Mark Maloy or Lauren Gaherty*.



Secretary of Commonwealth Development Doug Foy (left) and Secretary of Economic Development Ranch Kimball will discuss how Massachusetts "Smart Growth" policies may affect the Berkshires noon Friday 12/10 at Hancock Shaker Village.

## CEDS in Final Draft Pending Regional Endorsements

The Berkshire Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee, working with BRPC staff, will issue a final draft of the CEDS document in November 2004. In accordance with U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) guidelines, the document lays out a strategic Vision, a set of Goals and Objectives and a five-year Action Plan and Implementation Schedule for the overall economic development of the region. The Committee agreed to focus on a set of 10 projects, programs and activities (out of roughly 40 submitted), which members scored highest in overall regional economic development impact. The Committee will adjust its focus in coming years according to the relative progress of these and other submitted projects. By December 2004, the Committee hopes for endorsements from major regional bodies, including BRPC, the Berkshire and Southern Berkshire Chambers of Commerce, the Regional Competitiveness Council and several key municipalities. *Contact: Peter Falcier or Nat Karns*

## DCR Commissioner Abbott Will Be November BRPC Speaker

Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) [formerly Department of Environmental Management (DEM)] Commissioner Katherine F. Abbott will be the guest speaker at the November 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission at 7:30 p.m. at BRPC offices. Ms. Abbott was appointed as the first DCR Commissioner when the former DEM and Metropolitan District Commission were merged in 2003. Since taking the reigns, she has focused on improving the management of the agency and its land holdings. DCR owns and manages over 100,000 acres in Berkshire County. If you plan to attend, *please RSVP Debbie Polito*.

## Restructuring the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization

The existing Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is initiating a restructuring process. The aim of the restructuring is to bring the MPO into compliance with federal regulations; federal law requires an MPO to make transportation planning decisions and to program all federal transportation dollars for the region. The MPO is establishing a working group to develop a new memorandum of understanding (MOU) governing its composition and its decision-making procedures. It is anticipated that a draft MOU will be ready for public comment in the next few months. *Contact: Andrew Lenton or Nat Karns*.

## BRPC Seeks Additional EPA Brownfield Funds

BRPC will apply for another Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfield Site Assessment Grant to support the cleanup of hazardous waste sites throughout the region. If successful  
*(Continued on page 2)*

### CALENDAR

November 6	Executive Committee Meeting	3:30 PM	BRPC
November 18	BRPC Full Commission Meeting	7:30 PM	BRPC
December 1	Executive Committee Meeting	3:30 PM	BRPC
December 10	Foy & Kimball "Smart Growth"	12:00 PM	Shaker Vil.

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**Brownfields** (continued from page 1)

ful, the \$200,000 grant will complement the last year's \$100,000 petroleum assessment EPA grant. The assessment will focus on sites with the greatest health, safety, social and economic risks from hazardous waste. Ultimately, BRPC seeks to establish a broad-based, collaborative approach to move vacant, abandoned or underutilized hazardous waste sites toward productive use while improving the health and quality of life for area residents. A copy of the grant proposal can be viewed at [www.berkshireplanning.org](http://www.berkshireplanning.org). *Contact: Joellyn Warren*

**Departure of Planning Associate Kate McNulty-Vaughan**

BRPC Planning Associate and data specialist Kate McNulty-Vaughan left the BRPC staff September 30, 2004. Over her five years at BRPC, Kate was an engaging, thoughtful and hard-working colleague. She handled data requests from municipalities, municipal consultants and the occasional private interest, helping many Berkshire communities with grant applications, economic development, housing and employment initiatives, and other planning efforts. She served as BRPC's principal liaison with the various demographic data centers, including the U.S. Census Bureau and MISER at UMass. She was also deeply involved in the CEDS process,

**South Street Alternatives Study**

In close coordination with the Downtown Circulation Study (see story at right), BRPC staff will examine solutions to South Street traffic problems between Park Square and the Lenox town line, and on roads leading to South Street from the west. South Street (Route 7) is the major conduit for traffic between Pittsfield and points south. As such, it is also a subject of the north-south I-90 access improvement initiative. BRPC has just completed an analysis of existing and future conditions, which indicates that, while the situation is acceptable now, by 2030 several intersections, notably at the northern end of the study area, will become gridlocked due to projected traffic growth unless some corrective action is taken. The study's next steps include consulting the public for solutions, followed by evaluation of the possible solutions. *Contact: Anuja Koirala*

**McNulty-Vaughan** (continued from left)

providing a strategic mind and a guiding hand and contributing much of the staff work both this year and in 2001. Kate also researched and authored the Data Inserts that accompanied the BRPC newsletter. In her absence, the Insert is now on hiatus. Kate's primary duties, including demographic data collection, analysis, and assistance, will be shared by GIS Coordinator Mark Maloy and Associate Planner Peter Falcier.

**Downtown Pittsfield Circulation Study Gets Underway**

On behalf of the City of Pittsfield, BRPC is conducting a Downtown Circulation Study that will lay out strategies to improve regional traffic flow while enhancing the character and vitality of the downtown. This study is a crucial part of an overall initiative to perform environmental analysis, preliminary engineering and design of improvements in Pittsfield related to north-south access to I-90. However, traffic flow will not be the only concern; safety, parking, pedestrians, bicycles and commercial activity will also be studied. BRPC staff has already collected traffic counts on downtown streets and on streets leading into the area and has recently selected a consultant team of Fuss & O'Neill and Fitzgerald & Halliday. Work will start in late October. There will be ample opportunity for public comment; a public meeting will be scheduled before the end of the year. *Contact: Andrew Lenton*

**Clearinghouse Reviews**

Berkshire School Athletic Field Improvement ENF Comments (9/2/04)  
*Contact: Melissa Jette*

**E-mailing BRPC Staff?**

*Use first initial and last name (lower-case) followed by @berkshireplanning.org. For example, Executive Director Nat Karns is [nkarns@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:nkarns@berkshireplanning.org)*