

BERKSHIRE PLANNING TOOLS



One in a series of "toolbox" items to accompany the Regional Plan for the Berkshires

June 2002

Planning resources on the web

With the rise of the Internet, citizen planners now have around-the-clock access to numerous web sites on a variety of planning related topics. Below are selected websites that provide quality information in an easy to use format.

Remember to always begin your search for planning information at BRPC's website - www.berkshireplanning.org

GENERAL PLANNING

American Planning Association

www.planning.org

Lists upcoming conferences/workshops on planning issues, current and useful publications, discussions on hot planning topics, research, legislation and policies.

Massachusetts Chapter of the APA

www.massapa.org

The website has an updated calendar of events of interest to APA members and other planning officials. Archives of editorials and publications, and also has updates on legal affairs going on in the state.

Planning Commissioners Journal

www.planningreports.com

Latest edition of Planning Commissioners Journal, Planners Web Topics, articles on planning news from across the U.S.

National Association of Regional Councils

www.narc.org

A nonprofit membership organization serving the interests of regional councils and other metropolitan planning organizations nationwide. Information on topics in economic development, the environment and transportation.

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

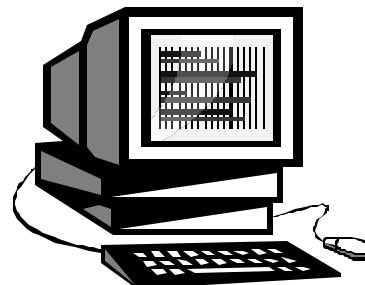
www.pvpc.org

Regional Planning Agency for 43 towns/cities in Hampshire and Hampden County. Current and past projects, as well as any cooperative projects with BRPC, resources listed, additional links to websites.

Franklin Regional Council of Governments

www.frcog.org

Regional Planning Council serving 26 towns of Franklin County, MA. List of Publications, contacts, recent planning projects, a data center, and links to Franklin County town websites.



COMMUNITY PLANNING

Citizen Planners Training Collaborative

www.umass.edu/masscptc

This website provides resources for local planning and zoning boards in Massachusetts such as training program sessions, a sample bylaw collection, on line training modules and links to regional planning agencies and other resources.

National Main Street Program

www.mainst.org

This site and program serves as the nation's clearinghouse for information, technical assistance, research and advocacy on preservation-based commercial district revitalization. Main Street Program was created as part of the National Trust for Historic Preservation to provide information on downtown revitalization.

National Center for Small Communities, National Association of Towns and Townships

www.natat.org

Non-profit organization dedicated to helping leaders of small communities obtain information on planning tools. Many publications available on different topics, including local government management, and many useful links.

Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development

www.state.ma.us/dhcd

Information on various Executive Orders for housing and community development in MA. Provides information on how to access housing assistance information, and also has links to various housing websites. Also numerous publications available on website.

Massachusetts Municipal Association

www.mma.org

Provides municipal headlines, municipal career opportunities, a listing of MMA actions, and updates on regional MMA meetings. Also local government information section, including city and town hall listings, demographic information,

Home Rule Acts for towns/cities, and other local facts and statistics.

TRANSPORTATION

U.S. Department of Transportation

www.dot.gov

Offers information on doing business with the DOT, links to all DOT organizations, FY budgets in brief, library resources including the National Transportation Library. Also available are numerous reports, publications, and dockets, as well as contacts for the DOT. Website also has a section for FAQ's and DOT current news.

MassHighway Department

www.state.ma.us/mhd

MassHighway press releases, notices of public hearings on projects, Adopt a Highway Programs, traffic volume counts, state aid forms, bridge drawings, as well as additional information on transportation planning issues.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center

www.walkinginfo.org

Offers downloadable guides on how to create walkable environments, highlights engineering improvements, and offers suggestions on education and enforcement on pedestrian harm issues.

Institute of Transportation Engineers

www.ite.org

The site is an information base for the ITE providing information on various seminars, meetings and publications the Institute is holding. Offers technical information on such topics as traffic calming, red light running, trip and parking generation, accessible intersections, and various other topics.

Surface Transportation Policy Project & TEA-21 Legislation

www.tea21.org

Hearing schedules, latest headlines, and in the news section that tracks the TEA-21 reauthorization debate.

Massachusetts Highway Traffic Counts

www.state.ma.us/mhd/trafficc/traffic.htm

Annual traffic data collection from Massachusetts Highway Department available by auto route and city/town. You can view data for a specific town or for numbered routes.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Environmental Protection Agency– Region 1– New England

www.epa.gov/region01

Includes information on key environmental topics, headlines in the news for the region, grants and funding opportunities, and links to educational and outreach materials.

Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

www.state.ma.us/envir

Information on current Executive Orders, including the Community Preservation Act, Massachusetts Watershed Initiative. Numerous useful links to other state such as the DEM, MDC, DFA, and DEP.

Smart Growth Network Homepage

www.smartgrowth.org

Information about what smart growth planning and growth principles, listing of national events, and a Smart Growth Resource Library.

Vermont Forum on Sprawl

www.vtspawl.org

Information on sprawl issues using case studies, has various publications, bibliography list, specific strategies to target sprawl, and additional helpful website links on the topic of sprawl.

American Farmland Trust

www.farmland.org

Site has hot topics in farmland preservation, information on how to save farmland including farmland protection tools, regional offices and staff directories, calendar of events, and their annual report.

Lincoln Institute of Land Policy

www.lincolninst.edu

The Institute is a private, nonprofit, educational institution dedicated to improving the understanding of, providing forums for learning about, and disseminating ideas about land use and taxation. The website provides current newsletter, as well as information on professional development courses, research, and publications.

Sprawl Watch Clearinghouse

www.sprawlwatch.org

Sprawl watch list serve, links to several of their reports on sprawl and how you can purchase the reports, and has a section on Federal legislation targeting sprawl and what individual states are working on.

Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials

www.nemo.uconn.edu

NEMO is an educational program for land use decision makers that addresses the relationship of land use to natural resource protection. Site contains tips on how to reduce runoff, information on various programs such as watershed planning projects, and available publications.

Housatonic River Restoration, Inc.

www.restorehousatonic.com

Designed to get various people's input on the restoration going on in the Housatonic River. Information on their Environmental Education Network, the Housatonic River Restoration Plan, Education Action Plan, and contact information.

Berkshire Planning Tools

Housatonic River Initiative

www.housatonic-river.com

Newsletter, links to press releases, as well as sites on PCB's, the Housatonic River, other PCB groups, and health links and contact information.

Center for Watershed Protection

www.cwp.org

Provides Model Ordinance Slideshows, information on current projects, technical tools, publications, and resource links.

Massachusetts Environmental Trust (grants)

www.agmconnect.org/maenvtr1

Information on MET funded projects, as well as grants available for environmental science, education, conservation, administration, and philanthropy.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Berkshire Connect

www.bconnect.org

Initiative to improve Berkshire County's Telecommunications Infrastructure. Explains history of initiative, current members, membership information, and names of preferred providers.

Berkshire Growth

www.berkshiregrowth.com

Jobs, information, and employment connections in Berkshire County. Numerous links.

Massachusetts Office of Business Development

www.state.ma.us/mobd

A wealth of information on permitting, economic target areas, finance and tax incentives, and Massachusetts success stories.

INFORMATION SERVICES/MAPPING/GIS

U.S. Census Bureau

www.census.gov

Enables you to pull up Census data for any state, region, municipality in the nation, including census tract information, demographic data, housing statistics, and population information.

MassGIS

www.state.ma.us/mgis

Geographic Information Systems data source for Massachusetts. Site contains municipal GIS resources, data viewers, and information on GIS education.

Massachusetts Department of Revenue-Division of Local Services

www.dls.state.ma.us

Offers a Municipal Data Bank with information on property taxes, Proposition 2 ½ information, and state aid information. Also offers information on training and seminars, information technology, and additional fiscal management information for towns and cities.

This publication is one in a series of "toolbox" items to support the Regional Plan for the Berkshires. If you would like to receive additional copies of this or other toolbox items, please contact the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, 1 Fenn St., Pittsfield, MA 01201 or call (413) 442-1521. Copies of the toolbox items are also available on the web. Visit www.berkshireplanning.org