

# COMMON GROUND

A NEWSLETTER FOR COMMUNITY PLANNING IN THE BERKSHIRE REGION

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## 2011 DLTA PROJECTS SELECTED

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission received a strong response to its solicitation for projects for this year's round of District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA). This unique state program provides BRPC staff time to help communities advance projects that are regional in nature or meet one or more the state's 10 Sustainable Development Principles.

## REGIONAL PROJECTS

### GE Rest of River Cleanup

Lee, Lenox, Great Barrington, and Stockbridge have requested assistance to work with GE to negotiate "rest of river" economic restoration as part of the "rest of river" cleanup. GE has completed the initial phases of work to remove PCBs from the Housatonic River and is negotiating the final phases of work. The towns anticipate economic impacts to their communities as a result of this cleanup and would like to negotiate the creation of a fund to help local economic development and to develop a strategic plan of projects that the fund could go to support.

### Permitting Software

BRPC will work with 13 towns to select and implement permitting software to streamline workload and improve service in the county. This request was made by a collaborative of Town Managers/Administrators.

### Regional NPDES

Pittsfield, Lanesborough, Dalton, and Lenox are subject to new EPA rules for the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit coverage. As a number of the requirements are the same, and because of limited staffing will make meeting the deadlines very difficult without assistance, they have proposed to work together to gain some economies of scale and achieve their NPDES permits.

### Regional Wastewater

The City of Pittsfield and Town of Lenox has requested BRPC to complete a feasibility study to determine the pros and cons of regionalizing their wastewater treatment. A steering committee will be formed to help review the details and analysis and determine a course forward.

### Tritown Shared Service Study

BRPC will continue the study began in FY2009 to look at each department of Lee, Lenox, and Stockbridge to identify potential shared service arrangements that could offer enhance service, cost savings, or both. Public Safety services were reviewed last year; this year will focus on remaining departments and would coordinate peer review of study by DOR and others who have performed similar studies.

### Tyringham Regional Housing

BRPC will work with the town to complete their Housing Production Plan and then continue discussion with the state about how the town could take a regional approach to affordable housing production.

SPRING!



# 2011 DLTA PROJECTS, CONTINUED

## COMMUNITY PROJECTS

### Renewable Energy Bylaws

- **Adams Wind Bylaw** : The Town of Adams has requested assistance to develop a Commercial-scale Wind bylaw.
- **Becket Wind Energy Bylaw**: The Town of Becket wishes to continue adding to its list of renewable energy bylaw of community-scale wind and large ground-mount solar, both as-of-right, with a new commercial-scale bylaw.
- **Peru Wind Bylaw**: The Town of Peru has requested assistance to develop a commercial-scale wind bylaw.
- **Washington Solar Bylaw**: The Town of Washington recently developed a Small Wind bylaw with the assistance of BRPC. The town now wishes to add a solar bylaw to its zoning code.

### Affordable Housing Bylaws

- **Sheffield Accessory Apartment Bylaw**: The Sheffield Housing Committee will work with BRPC and the Planning Board to develop Accessory Apartment bylaw provisions. The Town struggles with housing affordability issues and this bylaw will facilitate the addition of apartments to increase the number of affordable housing units.

### Community Character Bylaws

- **Egremont Village Center Bylaw**: This project will develop a Village Center District (VCD) Bylaw for the town of Egremont. Historically a farm community, the town has begun to see rural sprawl or rural-suburban develop encroach and replace once productive agricultural fields. This has placed increased emphasis in the town on the desire to keep rural areas rural while focusing new infill and mixed use development in its traditional village centers. The one zoning district that currently applies to the entire town, however, does not reflect the existing or desired development patterns and densities in these two areas. BRPC will work with the town to finalize draft village center boundaries and develop a tailored VCD zoning bylaw for the town.
- **New Marlborough Village Center Bylaw**: The Town will receive technical assistance to develop a new bylaw for Village Center District zoning. This land use tool called for in the recently completed town Master Plan supports numerous smart growth and sustainable development principles. The bylaw will tailor zoning in historic village centers to allow compatible mixed use and infill development to retain and support the traditional village-rural development pattern of the town.

### Economic Development Bylaws

- **Stockbridge Green Communities**: The Town of Stockbridge requested assistance with revisions to its Manufacturing district to meet the as-or-right criteria for R&D/Manufacture of renewable energy technologies to comply with one of the five Green Communities criteria. The Town also seeks public education and outreach assistance on the Stretch Energy Code in preparation for the Annual Town Meeting vote.
- **Lee Zoning Revisions – Mill Reuse**: The Town of Lee has requested assistance with a number of zoning revisions to facilitate the reuse of Eagle Mill, a 43D site of the town. The Town has developed an Eagle Mill reuse strategy that will require several zoning changes to successfully implement. BRPC will assist the town with the revisions and through the town meeting adoption process.

### Other Bylaws

- **Lanesborough Zoning Rewrite**: The town of Lanesborough has requested review assistance of its zoning rewrite. The town has completed most or all of the revisions and seeks an expert reader to suggest any additional edits or improvements before the Planning Board finalizes its draft to bring forward to town meeting for adoption.

## MASTER PLANNING

- **Great Barrington Master Plan**: The Town of Great Barrington initiated its master planning effort in late 2010 with the assistance of BRPC via a DLTA10 project. Around the same time, BRPC was notified of its successful application for a HUD Sustainable Communities Planning Grant to develop a regional plan. The town made the determination to align its planning process with the regional effort. The two plans will have separate but coordinated planning processes with some joint public events. This project will achieve the “above and beyond” public process and meeting attendance and coordination of BRPC to successfully achieve this contemporary planning process alignment.
- **North Adams Comprehensive Plan**: The city of North Adams decided to move forward with its first new Comprehensive Plan in 40 years as a result of its DLTA10 long-range planning strategy project. The City, like the Town of Great Barrington, plans to sequence its planning process with that of the regional plan. Due to limited staffing and resources at the City, this project will include materials preparation in addition to the public process and meetings to support the successful development of a new plan for the city.

BRPC Contact: Amy Kacala (x12)

# CURRENT PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

## DRAFT REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission is wrapping up its update to the Long Range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The RTP is updated every four years and is a comprehensive document that provides the basis for future transportation investment and planning in the region. BRPC anticipates that the RTP will provide long term focus for more than \$100 million dollars of Federal investment in the Berkshires over the next twenty-five(25) years. The RTP establishes a regional priority, reviews current transportation infrastructure in the region, and makes recommendations for future projects. All modes of transportation are discussed in the document, including roads, passenger rail, trucks & freight, airports, bus services, trails, and bike routes. A draft version of the updated Plan will be released for public review in March. Information regarding the Draft RTP can be found on the BRPC website-- [Berkshire 2011 RTP](http://Berkshire2011RTP). Comments or questions can be submitted to Transportation Planner, Doug Plachcinski, at [dplachcinski@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:dplachcinski@berkshireplanning.org) or 413-442-1521 ext. 16.

## WASHINGTON WELCOMES SMALL WIND ENERGY SYSTEMS

At a special town meeting on January 24, 2011, voters in the Town of Washington unanimously approved the adoption of a small wind energy systems zoning bylaw. The bylaw allows homeowners to install small wind energy systems as an accessory use. The bylaw contains a number of regulations that restrict the size and location of small wind energy systems, including limiting the height of the small wind energy system to 200', imposing a rated nameplate capacity limit of 60 kW per lot, and requiring setbacks from residences and public ways. BRPC worked in cooperation with the Washington Planning Board to develop this bylaw. Funding for this project was provided through the 2010 District Local Technical Assistance Program.

**BRPC Contact: Brian Domina ext. 14**

## GET YOUR SEASONAL BURN PERMITS ON-LINE!

The State of Massachusetts allows for residents to burn brush from January 15 to May 1 with a burn permit. A new website allows residents of participating municipalities to review existing state burning regulations and obtain burn permits. To date Richmond, Pittsfield, Peru, Lenox, Lanesborough, and Great Barrington have opted into the system and their residents can now apply for burn permits on-line. Slight procedure variations still apply based on municipal specifications. Great Barrington, Lanesborough, Lenox, Peru, and Pittsfield residents must obtain a permit for every day they intend to burn. Richmond residents must first register with the town before obtaining a daily burn permit on-line. The website restricts permitting activity to the hours of 7:30 AM and 1:00 PM. Residents of municipalities who have not yet opted into the system must still register directly with their town.

Using District Local Technical Assistance funds provided by the Commonwealth, the BRPC worked closely with the fire chiefs from these municipalities and an outside consultant to develop a comprehensive, one-stop shop for this burn season. Now fire departments can easily keep track of issued burn permits and quickly report season totals.

For additional questions, concerns, or if you are looking for more information please contact Sara Lafayette at [slafayette@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:slafayette@berkshireplanning.org) or (413) 442-1521 (ext. 19).

**Visit <http://www.bcburnpermits.com> to fill out your Open Burn Permit application today!**

## BRPC STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

### DAVE DASKAL

We bid adieu to Dave Daskal, BRPC's Transportation Program Manager. Dave will be moving back to the West Coast. Dave has provided a high level of expertise and steady leadership to transportation planning efforts since joining us in the summer of 2009.

### CLETE KUS

We welcome Clete Kus as the new Transportation Program Manager. Clete, currently a resident of Ludlow, has twenty years of transportation planning experience in the Las Vegas, Nevada region, a Masters in City Planning from Georgia Tech, a Bachelors degree from Westfield State College and is a native of Midwestern Massachusetts. Clete brings extensive MPO experience, managing UPWP studies, implementing transportation and transit initiatives, conducting community outreach and performing conformity analyses.

### PAT MULLINS

We congratulate Pat Mullins on her promotion to Senior Planner. Since joining BRPC in late 2008, Pat has primarily been involved with community development initiatives and the development and implementation of Community Development Block Grants. Through her work on these complicated projects, she has demonstrated the expertise and leadership required of a Senior Planner.



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## GRANTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### COMING SOON: NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTION GRANTS

The annual round of the Section 319 Nonpoint Source Pollution Competitive Grant program is expected to be announced in early April 2011. These grants support water quality improvement projects. Preference will be given to projects that propose to implement a combination of structural and non-structural BMPs addressing all impairments and leading to restoration in an impaired watershed or subwatershed. Education/Outreach and Demonstration projects are also eligible. The grant program requires a 40% match from applicants. The RFR will be posted at the Commonwealth's procurement site, [www.comm-pass.com](http://www.comm-pass.com) under Open Solicitations, Department of Environmental Protection, Professional Services. Grant deadline is expected to be on or around June 1<sup>st</sup>.

### MASSWORKS INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM INFORMATION SESSION

April Anderson Lamoureux, State Permit Ombudsman/Director with the Massachusetts Permit Regulatory Office will conduct an information session about the draft 2011 MassWorks Infrastructure Program Guidelines. The session will occur at 10:00 am on Friday March 25 in the second floor conference room of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, BRPC office on 1 Fenn Street, Pittsfield. Please register by e-mail: [tmatuszko@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:tmatuszko@berkshireplanning.org)

## CALENDAR

All meetings held in BRPC office unless otherwise noted.

### MARCH

- 1 **Executive Committee** 4:00 p.m.
- 17 **Brownfields Committee** 11:00 a.m.
- Commission Meeting** 7:00 p.m.
- 18 **Berkshire Environmental Collaborative** 9:00 a.m.
- 22 **TAC Meeting** 3:00 p.m.
- 25 **MassWorks Information Meeting** 10:00 a.m.
- 29 **MPO Meeting** 4:00 p.m.
- 31 **Regional Issues Committee** 3:30 p.m.
- 5th Thursday Dinner** 5:30 p.m.  
ITAM Lodge # 564  
93 Waubeek Road, Pittsfield

### APRIL

- 7 **Executive Committee Meeting** 4:00 p.m.
- 19 **TAC Meeting** 4:00 p.m.
- 26 **MPO Meeting** 4:00 p.m.

### KEEP FARMING! IN THE BERKSHIRES

#### Attention South County Residents!

If you are interested in or passionate about local food production and its contribution to community, GHG emission reductions, food security, local economy, and landscape heritage—or just love local food—get involved! The Agriculture Commissions of south county municipalities will be organizing community volunteers to help develop an action plan for preserving and strengthening agriculture and the local food system for years to come. Come learn how you can get involved!

**Keep Farming Kickoff Event!**  
**Tuesday, March 15 @ 7:00pm**  
**First Congregational Church**  
**251 Main Street, Great Barrington**

### CLEARINGHOUSE REVIEWS

None at this time.