

BERKSHIRE CEDS 2004 Draft Action Plan Activities

THE COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE BERKSHIRES

Please review the 2004 draft Action Plan Activities, which are correlated to the draft Goals & Objectives below. Consider whether the Activities shown are categorized under the appropriate Goal & Objective, whether any Activity should be eliminated or combined with another, or whether new Activities should be added. Also, it is very important from EDA's standpoint to consider how these Activities may be bundled into programs that will accomplish the Goals and Objectives set out for CEDS 2004. If there is a program of Activities that you feel is vital to meeting the Berkshire CEDS Goals, this is the venue for laying out your ideas. These programs can consist either of 1) Activities that are achievable under current conditions, or 2) proposed Activities that the region can work to put into place in the next 5 years or so.

Draft 2004 Goals & Objectives With Related Activities

GOAL 1. ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC VITALITY OF BASE & EMERGING INDUSTRIES IN IDENTIFIED REGIONAL CLUSTERS

Objective	Term	Activity Count	
A. Promote programs that enhance and redefine the skills of a varied work force			
Activities	Develop sectoral initiatives and career ladders within the region's critical industries to meet the needs of local businesses and of minority and under-served populations.	Short	1
	Enhance industry networks to better align the skill sets of job seekers with employer job opportunities.	Medium	2
	Strengthen employer relations with workforce programs and strategic planning to create economic development opportunities.	Long	3
	Expand employment and career objective exploration of youth with an increase in summer internships, employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.	Medium	4
B. Provide adequate/expanded financial support, improve access to capital and develop management capacity for a full range of economic development activities to promote innovation and expansion			
Activities	Develop a centralized information source for people and businesses developing or expanding a business in the region (providing information on financing, workforce and training, business services, sites and buildings, and permitting); all economic development entities in the region utilize the centralized source.	Short	5
	Organize specialized teams/contacts for assistance to existing and new businesses in all phases of business development: financial, management, business expansion, etc.	Medium	6
	Identify and publicize public, private and other available funding sources. A better tracking system of funding that is available and funneled into the Berkshires is needed. Identify new funding sources needed and find innovative ways to capitalize projects.	Long	7
C. Provide adequate inventory of sites and buildings for a variety of economic base and emerging industries			
Activities	Prepare feasible business development sites for complete market readiness.	Short	8
	Prepare regional and/or local brownfields site assessments; analyze sites for appropriate reuse and feasibility; Move feasible brownfields through appropriate clean-up to complete readiness to market.	Medium	9
	Prepare feasibility studies for additional/expanded business parks in each of 3 subregions of the County as identified in the Berkshire Economic Development Sites Strategy (BRPC, June 1999).	Medium	10
	Continue to analyze availability of variety of manufacturing sites and buildings aimed at new small manufacturers and the needs of expanding existing manufacturers in region.	Long	11

GOAL 2. IMPROVE REGION'S ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS THROUGH TARGETED INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENTS

Objectives	Term	Activity Count	
A. Improve the housing supply in the region.			
Activities	Promote development of new housing in appropriate locations in communities across the region, particularly in municipalities with sufficient infrastructure capacity, utilizing the results of recent community development plans.	Short	12
	Support collaborative efforts of municipalities, property owners, potential developers and state agencies to utilize upper floors of downtown buildings for multi-family (owner or renter occupied) housing.	Medium	13
	Develop a marketing program to attract new residential developers to the region.	Long	14
	Improve capacity of local contractors, developers and investors to renovate old housing and build new residences.	Long	15
B. Develop community-driven initiatives for downtown redevelopment that reflect the different sizes and functions of community centers in the region.			
Activities	Prepare feasibility studies for or move forward to complete readiness to market at least one building reuse project in each of the larger downtowns in the region (Great Barrington, Lee, Pittsfield, Dalton, Adams, North Adams, Williamstown).	Short	16
	Update community zoning and other development regulations to facilitate active, mixed-use downtowns and village centers.	Short	17
	Seek capitalization of a Downtown Revolving Loan Fund and create a committee to oversee its operation upon receipt of funding.	Medium	18
	Support downtown organizations in developing and conducting comprehensive downtown events, marketing, and improvements plans and programs that promote 24x7 activities.	Medium	19
	Develop a regional team to work with communities and developers in planning and packaging the complex redevelopment financing packages needed for individual building reuse projects in downtowns across the region.	Medium	20
	Program parking studies and provide assistance to communities in implementing those studies to communities where parking supply is a significant impediment to downtown investment.	Long	21
C. Transform our urban communities into livable places by enhancing neighborhood quality			
Activities	Explore opportunities to integrate neighborhood revitalization with business and downtown development initiatives.	Short	22
	Promote neighborhood advocacy, assessment and planning to tackle neighborhood issues: blight, housing development, traffic, safety and neighborhood amenities.	Medium	23
	Support community efforts to renovate housing, infrastructure and public facilities in neighborhoods.	Long	24
D. Improve transportation access and capacity throughout the region			
Activities	Develop area-specific studies as recommended in the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization's 2003 Regional Transportation Plan: Corridor Access Management on Rte. 8 in Lanesborough/Cheshire (underway) and Rte. 2 in North Adams/Williamstown (planning phase); Downtown Pittsfield Circulation Study (underway); South Street (Pittsfield) Alternatives Study (underway); Downtown Lee Alternatives Study (planned); alternating passing lane on Rte. 8 in Lanesborough/Cheshire (under design)	Short	25
	Implement the two major local Transportation Improvement Projects from the 2003 Regional Transportation Plan: widening East Street in Pittsfield (under design) and building a full interchange to I-90 in West Stockbridge	Medium	26
	Implement the regional policy recommendations from the 2003 Regional Transportation Plan	Long	27
E. Target water, sewer, telecommunications and other utility capacity to economic development target areas			
Activities	Assess water and sewer availability and capacity to serve key economic development target areas in the region; implement needed improvements.	Short	28
	Work with Berkshire Connect to continue the successful regional collaboration in providing affordable broadband telecommunications infrastructure through out the region, expanding it to deal with "last-mile" and wireless telecommunications issues	Medium	29
	Prioritize needs for improvements to treatment plants and major lines or to expand existing service areas in ways that are compatible with local community development or master plans.	Long	30

GOAL 3. PROMOTE REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND ANALYSIS

Objectives		Term	
A. Strengthen and expand growing regional economic cooperation to serve as the foundation for successful internal and external marketing and outreach.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain and expand the CEDS Committee on an ongoing basis, utilizing subcommittee capacity as warranted, and involving regional partners in conducting CEDS annual business/regional economy scans and strategies. 	Short	31
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain and build upon the Berkshire Regional Competitiveness Council, recognizing its key importance in facilitating State involvement and support and involvement by key regional decision-makers and opinion-leaders, and coordinating CEDS Committee work with that of the RCC. 	Medium	32
<i>Activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain and support the ongoing activities of business, government and education collaborations such as the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, the Berkshire Applied Technology Council and others in developing strategies and programs to deal with workforce needs for the region and its population. 	Short	33
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain and provide support to existing regional networks, such as the Berkshire Plastics Network, the Berkshire Visitors Bureau, and Berkshire Connect and support the creation of appropriate new networks that promote collaboration within key industry groups. 	Short	34
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Undertake a coordinated marketing campaign which builds upon and acknowledges our existing economic diversity. 	Long	35
B. Develop initiatives for region-wide projects and programs that foster regional collaboration.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the Berkshire Chamber of Commerce in maintaining and utilizing a site/ buildings/spaces inventory; marketing it, and promoting sites and buildings through an interactive, searchable web site. 	Short	36
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a regional retention and attraction program for firms and workers. 	Medium	37
<i>Activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Build outreach capabilities by adding economic outreach professionals and increased technical assistance to our smaller communities. 	Long	38
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct an assessment of regional organizational capacity for economic development, and areas for potential collaboration. 	Long	39
C. Develop a regional capacity to analyze and develop appropriate strategies to deal with changes in the demographics and economy of the region.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a regional taskforce with partners across fields and occupations to consider issues related to the age population of the Berkshires: especially the growing 85+, 65+ cohorts, effects of the "baby boomers," and median age. 	Short	40
<i>Activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve access to the array of social service agencies in the region to encourage partnering among service providers, and improve connections and accessibility for those in need of services. 	Medium	41
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a regional benchmark against which to continually identify and assess strengths and weaknesses. 	Long	42