



Common Ground

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Berkshire
Regional
Planning
Commission

Feature: Developing a Corridor Management Plan for the Mohawk Trail



BRPC is partnering with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) to develop a Corridor Management Plan for the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway. The purpose of the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway corridor project is to recognize,

interpret, preserve and promote the unique scenic, cultural, archeological, natural and recreational resources of the historic Mohawk Trail in Franklin and Berkshire Counties through the development of a Corridor Management Plan and accompanying public participation process.

The Mohawk Trail

The Mohawk Trail of western Massachusetts, also known as state highway Route 2, was one of the earliest Scenic Byways in New England, receiving its designation in 1953. The corridor is rich in natural, cultural and archeological resources, and historic villages and structures. It also includes some of the most beautiful scenic areas in Massachusetts. The Mohawk Trail is already an extremely popular auto-touring route during the Fall Foliage season. The Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway corridor includes the communities of Greenfield, Shelburne, Buckland and Charlemont in Franklin County; and Savoy, Florida,

Clarksburg, North Adams and Williamstown in Berkshire County. The Study area includes Route 2 and a one-half mile buffer strip along each side of the road. The total length of the Byway is approximately 41 miles, with 22 miles in Franklin county and 19 miles in Berkshire County.

What is a Scenic Byway?

A scenic byway is a route that people generally enjoy traveling and that reflects the intrinsic qualities of an area. The intrinsic qualities can be forests and mountains, communities, historic landmarks, or recreation resources for which

the area is known. A byway can consist of one or more roads, and include rural or developed areas. Designating a route as a scenic byway can help residents plan how to preserve what they like best about it for the future and makes it eligible for additional grant funds. For more information on scenic byways, visit www.byways.org.



The Corridor Management Plan

A corridor management plan is a tool that provides an inventory (Mohawk Trail continued on page 3)

Community Development Planning Continues Throughout Region



Since the last update, Dalton and Florida have received approval for their CDP Scopes of Services. This brings the total number of towns approved in Berkshire County to eight. The Scopes for 12 other towns have been submitted to the State for review and all of these should be approved by the end of May. The Towns of Adams and Egremont are wrapping up their pre-planning efforts and will likely be submitting Scopes for review sometime in May.

There are a few Towns in the region that did not initially express interest in participating in the Community Development Plan program, but are now considering participation. Interest in the program across the state has also mushroomed. In October of 2001 only 90 communities (nearly a third of these were from our region) were signed on to the program. Now, over 170 communities across the Commonwealth are interested in participating. Due to this dramatic increase in participation, the program's funding deadline has been formally extended by 6 months. The original completion date for all planning work associated with the Community Development Plans was June 30, 2003; this has been changed to December 30, 2003. Contact: Bryan Boeskin

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Programs, Projects and Grants

New Project: Kampoosa Bog Invasive Plant Control and Awareness Program

BRPC will soon be partnering with the Kampoosa Bog Stewardship Committee and the Stockbridge Land Trust to embark on the Kampoosa Bog Invasive Plant Control and Awareness Program. Kampoosa Bog is an extremely rare and fragile ecosystem that is threatened by invasive non-native plant species. The main goals of this program are to: 1) identify and map invasive plant species and recommend specific control methods to impede and/or stop their advance; 2) conduct an outreach campaign to educate local landowners and interested citizens about the destructive impacts of invasive species on sensitive natural ecosystems, and 3) work with local landowners to develop a Kampoosa Bog Neighborhood Watch program to identify and control invasive species within the Bog's watershed. Funding for this program is being provided by the Stockbridge Land Trust and the Berkshire Environmental Fund. *For more information on the program contact Lauren Gaherty, or visit the DEM's website at: <http://www.state.ma.us/dem/programs/acec/acecs/l-kambog.htm>.*

Free BRPC Workshop: How to file a Generic Notice of Intent

Psst... would you like to learn how your community can increase the efficiency of permitting DPW work? If so, then you should attend a free workshop on Thursday May 16, 7 pm at the Lanesborough Town Hall that will describe how a Generic Notice of Intent (GNOI) works. GNOIs are a relatively new wetlands filing "tool", designed to help DPWs "bundle" maintenance-type road work into one comprehensive permit. The "bundling" of numerous maintenance-type projects into one permit application will eliminate the need for DPWs to file and receive individual permits for projects, in essence streamlining wetlands permitting for maintenance work. BRPC has been working with five Berkshire communities to implement a GNOI on behalf of their local DPWs. Come learn about how it worked and if it may be right for your community. Representatives for the MA Department of Environmental Protection will be on hand to answer questions. *For more information, please contact Jim McGrath.*

Grant Opportunities

Massachusetts Historic Landscape Preservation Program Grants: APPLICATION DEADLINE: **May 15, 2002 4PM;** FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT: Joanna Doherty (617) 626-1390. Or email joanna.doherty@state.ma.us; APPLICATIONS can also be found online at <http://www.state.ma.us/dem/programs/histland/histland.htm>

Recently Awarded Grants

Otis Reservoir Lake Management Implementation
(BRPC Contact: *Jim McGrath*)
Stormwater Management Plans in the East Branch Housatonic Watershed (BRPC Contact: *Amy Pfeufer*)
Adams Stormwater Study Project (Town of Adams - BRPC Contact: *Tom Matuszko*)

St. Lawrence Cement Update: New York DEC Issues Draft Air Permit

On March 21st the New York Dept. of Environmental Conservation (NYDEC) issued its revised Draft Air Permit for the proposed St. Lawrence Cement facility in Greenport for public review and comment. The purpose of the revisions were to address inadequacies in the Draft Air Permit that were discovered during the public State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process, in which BRPC participated during the summer of 2001.

The revisions to the new Draft Air Permit are complex and scientifically detailed, and BRPC does not have technical expertise to properly review the new conditions. We do have a qualified consultant available, but money to pay the consultant is in short supply at BRPC. DEP will be limited in its review and the issues it can comment upon to those covered under the Federal Clean Air Act and will not be able to comment upon mercury, finer particulates (PM2.5), or CO2 emission from the plant, all of which could impact the air quality of the Berkshires and the health of its residents. If you are interested in supporting a qualified, independent review that represents the best interests of the Berkshires please make a contribution immediately to the Friends of Berkshire Regional Planning Fund at the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, 271 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230. *Contact: Lauren Gaherty*

NPDES Storm Water Phase 2 Requirements and Highway Garages

The US EPA has expanded its stormwater requirements to include **all vehicle maintenance facilities**. How does this affect your town? By March 10, 2003, all highway maintenance garages must obtain permit coverage for the facility and comply with the requirements of the EPA's Phase II Program. First step: apply for the Multi-Sector General Permit. If your facility can certify "No Exposure" (all materials and activities are kept from exposure to precipitation) you have met the requirements of Phase 2 rules. If not, you must develop and implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), which includes a map showing all the industrial operations, the drainage system, storage of chemicals and wastes, etc. Although municipal highway garages have until March 10, 2003, to obtain coverage under the Multi-Sector General Permit, the facility must also implement the SWPPP by March 10, 2003. Alternatively, if a highway garage wants to qualify for the No Exposure provision, they must shelter all operations and materials from precipitation and submit the No Exposure certification by March 10, 2003.

DPWs should plan on attending a workshop that will be hosted by BRPC and the Berkshire County Highway Superintendents Association in mid-July. Stay tuned for more details on the specifics of this Phase II compliance workshop. *Contact Jim McGrath for more information .*

Transportation Update

A Closer Look: The Bicycling & Walking Transportation Plan



The Bicycling and Walking Plan focuses on making walking and bicycling safer and more convenient for short trips when desired or necessary. While BRPC coordinates with recreational groups, this is a transportation planning project. It includes a Bicycle

Compatibility Index (BCI) for all roads in Berkshire County and it uses a prioritization process to make specific draft recommendations. The prioritization process incorporates the BCI, accidents, terrain, and demand factors. The demand factors include being near residential or commercial areas, schools, parks, or areas where many households don't have a vehicle. The methodology is designed to be open for any interested community to review and refine to local goals. This plan gathers and analyzes a variety of relevant information. It will be up to communities to implement the recommendations for which BRPC can provide technical assistance. *Contact: Zoe Neaderland*

Transportation Term of the Month: **Bicycle Compatibility Index (BCI)**

The USDOT developed a methodology to give a grade of A through F to roads for their bicycling compatibility. This Level Of Service grade is commonly used for vehicle traffic. The BCI combines evaluations of shoulders, sidewalks, traffic, parking, and bicyclist-friendly land uses. What it does not do (but the BRPC prioritization process goes on to do) is incorporate hills, accident locations, or where improvements would likely be most used.

GIS Update

Several projects are underway involving Geographical Information Systems (GIS). Maps for the Mohawk Trail are nearing completion for the Scenic Byway report. Work is also continuing on the EPA Storm Water Phase II mapping project. Community Development Plan maps and the development suitability criteria are also progressing for several communities. Planning for phase two of the Resource Area Maps has begun and work will progress on several communities over the coming months. BRPC has also assisted several communities in applying for a grant from MassGIS to digitize their parcel data. This grant will allow the communities to get digital parcels produced at little or no cost to the community. Hancock, New Ashford and Savoy have applied for this grant using BRPC as their contractor to perform the digitization. *Contact: Mark Maloy*

What's Happening in Transportation

Corridor Access Management Guidelines for the Berkshires have come along slowly, but should be distributed in May. This will be a transportation addition to the Berkshire Planning Tools.

The draft Berkshire **Bicycling & Walking Transportation Plan** will be distributed for public review in May (see related article).

The annual update of the **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** will be discussed in May and June, and then available for public review in July.

If you receive a postcard in June or July asking about your travel patterns as part of the BRPC **Origin-Destination Survey**, please help by filling it out and returning it. This study will gather and analyze important information for transportation planning.

The **Great Barrington Traffic Circulation Study** will analyze problems and identify solutions for public review. Contact BRPC if you would like further information.

The BRTA expects to break ground in July on the **Intermodal Transportation Center**. This will be a central location for taking trains, buses (local & inter-city), or taxis, with parking for cars and bicycles. Contact them at (800) 292-BRTA for more information.

Traffic Counting Season is Coming Up!

Every summer, BRPC conducts traffic counts in different locations in Berkshire County. This year is no exception! We welcome requests by cities and towns for all special location counts. BRPC also performs pavement management condition surveys to keep track of the condition of both paved and unpaved roads. *Contact: Raymond Wong*

Mohawk Trail (continued from page 1)

and assessment of important resources and articulates specific strategies and actions designed to achieve identified and measurable results. In order to get to specific actions it is important that the common direction of the Byway be stated. This is done through the use of a Vision Statement and a clear listing of goals for the plan.

Next Steps for the Plan

We are now almost at a point, after several months of work, to offer our Draft Plan for review and comments to local officials, residents, and other interested parties. The Draft Corridor Management Plan will be available for public review at the libraries and city and town halls of Mohawk Trail communities, as well as on our website. In addition, BRPC and FRCOG will sponsor public meetings in May in both Berkshire and Franklin counties to discuss the contents of the Plan. The dates and locations of these meetings will be publicly advertised. *If you are interested in reviewing the Draft Plan and/or attending any of these meetings, please contact Lauren Gaherty.*

Clearinghouse Reviews

The following comments were submitted by the BRPC under the direction of the Clearinghouse Review Committee between 2/19/01 and 4/19/02.

- **Burning Tree Subdivision** (Great Barrington). Comments on the ENF were submitted to MEPA on 3/23/02.
- **Brodie Mountain** (New Ashford). Comments on the Water Management Act permit were submitted to the MA DEP on 4/8/02.
- **Mead Willow Mill** (Lee). Comments on the 401 Water Quality permit were submitted to the MA DEP on 3/7/02.
- **Improvements at Lenox Library** (Lenox). Comments submitted to MassDevelopment regarding preliminary bond approval, 2/19/02.
- **Improvements at Miss Hall's School** (Pittsfield). Comments submitted to MassDevelopment regarding preliminary bond approval, 2/19/02. *Contact: Jim McGrath*

Smart Growth Update:

BRPC & Lenox Enlist Dodson Associates to Conduct Gateway Study

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission has hired the Dodson Associates, a consultant team from Ashfield, MA to perform a public outreach process and develop a vision for the appropriate development standards for the **Lenox Gateway Area** on Route 7 & 20. Dodson Associates will investigate the redevelopment potential of the former Lenox Country Shops along with other large

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parcels abutting the shops which have development capacity. This project is intended to provide the Town and the region with a guidance document and design standards to protect natural resources, improve transportation & parking, promote appropriate mixed commercial uses, and provide evidence for affordable housing. An interactive public process will commence in May with public presentations held in June and July. This project is intended to conclude in July 2002.

Still Room to Register for May 1st Smart Growth Workshop

BRPC, along with Dodson Associates, will introduce the Lenox Gateway Area smart growth project at the **Smart Growth Workshop** to be held on May 1, 2002. Please contact Joellyn at BRPC to register.

Date CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Wed, May 1	Smart Growth Workshop, 5:30PM, The Red Lion Inn, Stockbridge
Wed, May 8,	CPTC Workshop: Basics of Reading a Subdivision Plan, 7PM, Specialty Minerals, Adams.
Thurs, May 16	Generic Notice of Intent Workshop, 7PM, Town Hall, Lanesborough.
Thurs, May 16	CPTC Workshop: Special Permits and Variances, 7PM, Town Hall, Great Barrington.
Thurs, Jun 20	BRPC Annual Meeting w/Guest Bob Durand, 6PM, Pittsfield Country Club, 639 South St., Pittsfield.

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