

Common Ground

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Berkshire
Regional
Planning
Commission

2004 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

BRPC is initiating the required update of the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The Berkshire CEDS was last prepared in 2001 and contains a priority list of the most critical economic development projects for the region. Highest priority projects in the 2001 CEDS were:

- Redevelopment of the GE Site (Pittsfield)
- North Adams Gravel Pit Site Development
- North Adams Venture Center
- Jones Block Restoration (Adams)
- Water and Sewer Expansion to Pittsfield Municipal Airport
- Site Feasibility Study for Route 8 Corridor between Adams and North Adams
- Site Feasibility Study for Route 102 Corridor in Lee
- Site Feasibility Study near Pittsfield Municipal Airport
- Regional Revolving Loan Fund for Downtown Areas throughout the Berkshires
- Workforce Development Initiatives

The CEDS serves two purposes: 1) it is an ongoing process of establishing regional priorities primarily for physical projects that serve economic development purposes; and 2) it maintains the ability for eligible areas within the Berkshires to compete for funds from the U.S. Economic Development Administration for priority economic development projects.

As work commences on the CEDS update, the various community and economic development related organizations from across the region will be approached for updated or new project possibilities. The CEDS Committee is also being re-established and will have the primary role in reviewing regional economic development goals and establishing which projects are best suited to meet those goals. The Committee is comprised of representatives of various sectors, geography and socio-economic backgrounds.

For further information on the CEDS process, contact Associate Planner Peter Falcier, Planning Associate Kate McNulty-Vaughan, or Executive Director Nat Karns.

Also Inside this Issue:

Sr. Planner Amy Pfeufer offers help applying for 604b H₂O Quality Management Grant. (*See Grants, page 2*)

Housatonic River Restoration (HRR) to update plan as NRD Trustees develop \$25 mil. comprehensive plan (*See Projects, page 2*)

Meet BRPC's new transportation planner, the impressive Ravindra Wijesundera. (*See Transportation Update, page 3*)

BRPC Currently Reviewing Pittsfield Airport Environmental Reports



The Pittsfield Airport Commission has submitted to the state a Draft Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Report (DEA/EIR) for airport development recommendations presented in the 2001 Pittsfield Airport Master Plan Update (AMPU). The AMPU identified a number of safety and design deficiencies within the existing airport layout and developed recommendations to correct these deficiencies.

Primarily, the DEA/EIR will describe project alternatives with the goal of reducing environmental impacts while serving the needs of the project. BRPC reviewed a preliminary report that described alternatives for construction of runway safety areas and extension of the main runway. Adjunct changes to the runway improvements propose installation of an instrument landing system, clearing the runway approaches of obstructions, construction of a parallel taxiway, extension of city sewer and water lines, and new hangar, terminal and parking area. Some of the alternatives involve closing South Mountain Road and Wild Acres Park.

BRPC will review the DEA/EIR for compliance with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act, local plans and BRPC transportation policy. BRPC's policy strives to maintain current service levels at local airports while meeting federal safety guidelines. How this can be done while minimizing impacts to local neighborhoods and the environment will guide the review of the DEA/EIR. *Contact: Nat Karns.*

Programs, Projects and Grants

Grant
Opportunity

604b H₂O Quality Management Grant

The MA DEP will soon issue a Request for Responses for the 604b Water Quality Management Planning Grant Program. Grants are available to cover up to 100% of the cost for planning and assessment activities aimed at reducing nonpoint source pollution, correcting stormwater problems, enhancing watershed planning, improving drinking water supplies, etc. BRPC has successfully used these grants to generate conceptual designs for improving stormwater problems; assessing unpaved road runoff problems; develop watershed surveys and map stormwater drainage systems. All municipalities and other public entities are eligible. For information or help with an application contact Amy Pfeufer.

Savoy Completes Community Development Plan

Recently, the Town of Savoy became one of the first towns in the region to complete its 2003 Community Development Plan (CDP). Savoy's CDP planning efforts began in 2001, when the Select Board authorized participation in the program and appointed a volunteer Community Development Plan Advisory Committee to guide and direct the completion of the Plan. Working cooperatively with BRPC staff, the Committee held five open meetings over the last 15 months to discuss and analyze important issues facing the Town and to develop recommended actions. The results of the analysis, public input and recommended actions are compiled in the Town of Savoy 2003 Community Development Plan document that is available at Town Hall and at the Library. The Plan will eventually be available on-line at the MA Department of Housing And Community Development website.

The Community Development Plan contains a wealth of data and information on the Town, as well as goals and action strategies for maintaining and improving the Town's housing, economy, transportation infrastructure, and natural resources. Through the CDP Program Savoy was able to work with the Conway School of Landscape Design to update its outdated Open Space Plan. The housing element of the plan included a comprehensive housing data profile, a strategy for maintaining and developing affordable housing, and Executive Order 418 Housing Certification. The economic development element included an economic data profile, economic development strategy and a \$500,000 Small Town Road Assistance Program (STRAP) grant application for major improvements to New which is the primary road linking Savoy to its major economic resource, Savoy Mountain State Forest. The transportation element of the plan included an Engineering Investigation for culvert replacements to Chapel Road and the improvements to New State Road.

At the final meeting of the Savoy CDP Advisory Committee, committee member and Savoy Highway Superintendent, Ray LaBonte stated that "The Community Development Plan has been a great help to us, especially with services that were at no cost to the Town." Advisory committee members Don Phinney and Debra Kaczowski also commented on the fact that the Plan would be very helpful to the Town in securing future funding for road improvement and park projects that were identified through the Plan. *Contact: Bryan Boeskin*

Housatonic River Restoration To Update Local Restoration Plan

For six years now, BRPC has participated in the Housatonic River Restoration (HRR) collaborative, an organization devoted to representing environmental interests and concerned citizens in the restoration of the Housatonic River. After General Electric and the EPA reached a settlement agreement on clean-up of the river in 1998, HRR gathered input from over 1000 citizens to produce a river restoration plan that reflected the desires of local communities and residents that were most affected by the PCB contamination. The plan was presented to the Natural Resource Damages (NRD) Trustee Council established by federal statute to oversee restoration of the river. BRPC organized a regional meeting for the first round of meetings that led to the original HRR plan and BRPC has been a delegate member of the governing council ever since.

HRR is now seeking to refresh the plan as the NRD Trustees begin to develop a comprehensive river restoration plan worth \$25 million. HRR will help advance local desires in the NRD comprehensive planning process. Projects and activities that have been supported in HRR's original plan include ecological surveys and pollution abatement studies, development of recreational trails and canoe launch sites, public and school-based river education, and stewardship activities that restore the resource as both a community and environmental asset. As an organization, HRR has given grants and lent significant support to projects and activities conducted by environmental and community organizations, municipalities and local schools. The updated HRR plan will not only inform the Trustee Council, but will help to guide locally-based grassroots restoration of the Housatonic River.

BRPC delegates and alternates are in a unique position to give regional perspective to the plan while at the same time being sensitive to individual local concerns. To provide input on the plan update, meetings in November are on Wednesday 11/12 at Berkshire South Community Center, 7:00 pm and Thursday 11/20 at Hinsdale Town Hall Community Room 7:00 pm. If unable to attend the meetings, send comments (by December 31) to HRR, P. O Box 472, Great Barrington 01230-0472 or: river@restorehousatonic.com.

BRPC Seeks Up to \$300,000 in EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant Funds

Over the last three decades, the Berkshires has suffered huge losses in its employment base. As a direct result, many of the buildings and commercial sites that played a part in the Berkshires' once-illustrious manufacturing industry have been abandoned, creating scars on the landscape in turn. Worse, the stigma of real or perceived contamination at these sites has created a barrier to their reuse and redevelopment.

In response, BRPC has joined community stakeholders in developing the Berkshire Brownfield Assessment Program (BBAP), an effort to uncover the realities behind these sites and bring them on line for redevelopment as a means to benefit the region and spur their sustainable economic reuse. As a first step in the process, BRPC will apply to the Environmental

(Continued on page 4)

TRANSPORTATION UPDATE

Three Major Regional Transportation Planning Documents On Their Way to Towns, Libraries, Web

- Several reports are on their way to each town/city hall (by way of BRPC Delegates), major Berkshire libraries and for posting on the BRPC web site. These are the Regional Transportation Plan (the twenty year plan), the Transportation Improvement Program (the five year listing of specific capital projects) and the Unified Planning Work Program (the annual description of transportation planning projects in the Berkshires). Everyone on the Berkshire Transportation Forum will receive a copy of the poster being made of the Executive Summary of the Plan. These documents may also be read or purchased (for the cost of reproduction) at BRPC.
- The Transportation Committee will be discussing and deciding on a new way to prioritize TIP projects that better reflects regional goals and needs. New participants are always welcome.
- Three communities (New Marlboro, Richmond, and Williamstown) received reports, as requested, inventorying the conditions of their roads to assist in planning and budgeting maintenance. Surveys of roadway surface conditions and traffic counts are offered to communities by BRPC each spring.

Meet BRPC's New Traffic Planner...



...Ravindra Wijesundera.

Ravi, as he is known around the office, holds a Master's degree from the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa. Prior to his study in the United States, Ravindra got his B.S.C.E. and M.Eng. degrees from the University of Moratuwa in Sri Lanka. He has more than four years of work and research experience in the field of Transportation Engineering. Ravindra's responsibilities at BRPC include overseeing traffic count and pavement surface management programs. He will also contribute to TIP development, travel demand modeling, and providing technical assistance to transportation planning studies.

Term of the Month

Road Surface Management System (RSMS)

Management systems develop up-to-date inventories and help communities plan and budget for maintenance of roads, signs, or other capital investments. RSMS is a software package for assessing paved and unpaved roads regarding appropriate maintenance measures and costs. BRPC provides technical support to communities that wish to employ this approach.



If roads like this look all too familiar to you, your town may be a good candidate for Road Surface Management System (RSMS) assessment. BRPC transportation planner Ravi Wijesundera and traffic planning intern Srinivas Sattoor have been in Williamstown, New Marlboro, Monterey and Richmond this fall offering technical assistance on identifying, managing and maintaining road surfaces—paved, unpaved...or anything in between. *Contact: Andrew Lenton*

Changes to Title 5 Septic System Regulations

As of January 1, 2004 the MA regulations governing on-site sewage disposal, known as Title 5, will change to allow soil percolation rates up to 60 minutes per inch for new septic systems. In comments submitted to the state last year, BRPC expressed concern that this provision would open more rural and marginal land to development. Currently, many communities rely on Title 5 as a growth limiting tool. Now is the time to make changes to municipal bylaws and policies to preclude potential negative effects of sprawl-type growth. *Contact: Amy Pfeufer*

Clearinghouse Reviews

The following comments were submitted by the BRPC under the direction of the Clearinghouse Review Committee between 9/15/03 and 11/01/03:

- Silver Maple Farm Cluster Development (Dalton). ENF comments submitted to MEPA on 9-25-03.
- Snowy Owl Resort (New Ashford). Groundwater Discharge Permit comments submitted to DEP on 10-1-03.
- Pittsfield Sewer Extension (Pittsfield). Sewer Connection Permit comments submitted 10-9-03.
- Butternut Basin Ski Area (Gt. Barrington). Water Management Act Permit comments submitted to DEP on 10-22-03.

BRPC expects to provide comments on the EIR for the Pittsfield Airport project during the coming weeks. It is anticipated that BRPC will hold a special Full Commission meeting to discuss the project and form our comments. We look forward to active participation and guidance from our Delegates and Alternates on this important project. *Contact: Lauren Gaherty*

Brownfields Grant Applications *(Continued from page 2)*

Protection Agency (EPA) on December 4, 2003, for up to \$300,000. BBAP funding will provide the capital needed to develop a community-wide brownfield site assessment program to inventory, research, prioritize, and assess real or perceived contaminated sites. Additionally, EPA awards will be used to reduce health and safety concerns and provide funds for education and outreach in communities most affected by brownfield sites. *Contact: Joellyn Warren*

BRPCConnections

Web Site
Electronic Mail
Chair
Executive Director
Staff:
Assistant Director
Senior Planners

Planner
Traffic Planner
GIS Coordinator
Associate Planners

Planning Associate
Bookkeeper
Secretary
Office Administrator
Traffic Planning Intern
Planning Interns

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Melissa Jette
Ravindra Wijesundera
Mark Maloy
Pete Falcier
Leigh Anne Adams
Kate McNulty-Vaughan
Carolyn LeBlanc
Debbie Polito
Joyce McGuire
Srinivas Sattoor
Sari Calame
Ben McCrary

BRPC Welcomes Its New Commission Delegates and Alternates

- David Durante (Lee Delegate)
- John Friend (Lanesborough Alternate)
- Stephen LaBelle, Sr. (Becket Alternate)
- Edward MacDonald (Adams Alternate)
- John Mooney (Great Barrington Delegate)
- Douglas Newman (New Marlboro Alternate)
- Douglas Poland (Washington Alternate)
- Stephen Sample (Lenox Delegate)
- James White (Hancock Delegate)

Date CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Wed—November 5—Executive Committee meeting—BRPC offices— 3:30 PM**
- Tues—November 18—CPTC: Roles and Responsibilities of PBs and ZBAs—Specialty Minerals, Adams— 6:00 PM**
- Wed—November 19—CPTC: Planning With Community Support—Town Hall, Great Barrington— 6:00 PM**
- Thurs—November 20—Full Commission meeting—BRPC offices— 7:00 PM**
- Wed—December 3—Executive Committee meeting—BRPC offices—3:30 PM**



Berkshire Work Force: Residents & Commuters

BERKSHIRE JOURNEY-TO-WORK FLOWS

This spring the Census Bureau released the County to County Worker Flow file, followed in late July by data on commuter flows for each Massachusetts community. These files, also called the Journey-To-Work (JTW) data, were compiled from Census 2000 responses to questions on where people worked. (See box at right for details.)

The files offer two perspectives on the Berkshire region's Work Force: where resident workers live and where they go to work (whether within the region or elsewhere), and where the people who fill jobs in the Berkshires come from — those same resident workers and others who commute into the Berkshire region to work. While these files provide only a snapshot — not a full picture — of the regional Work Force or job-related commuting, they contain a credible and sizable amount of data useful in discussion and analysis of a region's core Work Force and commuting patterns. Data discussed here are from Census 1990 and 2000 JTW files (with adjustments as noted below).**

DEFINING THE REGIONAL WORK FORCE

The Berkshire Work Force primarily consists of resident workers (64,058) and workers who commute into the region to work (6,493). The demographics of a region's population (age, sex, race) and its mix of household types (family and non-family, single person, the number and age of children in households) have a major influence on the size of the labor force ("participation rates") — on how many workers are available in a region. Supply and location of jobs and housing also play a role in whether workers *reside* or *commute into* (or out of) a region for work. The attractiveness of jobs (career opportunities, pay, benefits, flex schedules, etc.) and demand for workers (seasonal and otherwise) also affect the number of people in the Work Force at any time and their willingness to move or commute for work, or even hold multiple jobs. The size of the Work Force is somewhat elastic, expanding or contracting in response to these factors.

All of these factors translate into the number of workers a region can call upon to fill jobs, whether those workers are residing in the region or adding to total available Work Force by commuting in from outside.

**Berkshire Regional Work Force:
65,000 to 70,000⁺ Resident and Commuter Workers.**

Over the past decade the size of the Berkshire Work Force has remained relatively static (in the 65,000 to 70,000 range). Declining in response to the early 1990's recession, the

Berkshire Work Force numbers have fluctuated to meet seasonal and other demands, but it has not grown.

BERKSHIRE RESIDENTS — BERKSHIRE WORKERS

Berkshire County is frequently described as having a "self-contained" economy, due to its geographic isolation and the lack of other competing large employment centers nearby within easy commuting distance.

**The Berkshire region has 64,058 Resident Workers:
59,386 (92.7%) work in the County
4,672 (7.3%) work outside Berkshire County**

Competition for workers at the eastern end of the state is clearly in evidence in other Massachusetts counties where the JTW data show high percentages (33%) of residents working outside their county of residence. Berkshire, Cape Cod and the island counties (Barnstable, Dukes, Nantucket) show the opposite: high percentages of residents working in-county. *Continued p.2*

Census 2000 Work-Related Questions:

**"LAST WEEK did this person do ANY work for pay or profit?"
"At what location did this person work LAST WEEK?"**

The data available on where people work (both residents and workers commuting into the region) discussed in this insert come from responses to Census 2000 long-form (sample) questions. They are compiled only for:

- **Workers** (people *at work* during the "reference week") who are **16 years of age and older**.

Workers employed but not *at work* during the reference week (*LAST WEEK*) due to temporary absences — vacation, illness, bad weather, layoffs or contract disputes, or personal reasons are not included in this place-of-work data.

"...Where he or she worked most during the previous week ..."

The questions also limit *workers* to describing only one job and one work location, whether they are multiple job-holders, working full-time and/or part-time combinations of jobs at more than one location. Workers are also asked for information relating to their place of work "*LAST WEEK*"-- which may not be their usual place of work, but the location of an out-of-state work-related meeting, sales trip, or other special or short term work location.

As a result, the data do not describe all workers, jobs, or all work locations in a region — just a sample of the workforce at a single workplace during the "previous week."

****Otis and Windsor adjustments:** Adjustments have been made to both 1990 and 2000 regional data due to errors in the allocation of workers to Berkshire workplaces. Workers from southeastern Massachusetts and the Cape whose place of work was Otis Air Force Base were incorrectly sited in Otis (town); Windsor in Berkshire County was allocated workers meant for Windsor, CT. □

BERKSHIRE RESIDENTS — BERKSHIRE WORKERS *con't.*

As in past decades, most Berkshire resident workers (95%; 61,101) find work in the Commonwealth, if not in their home county, with 2% (1,353) working nearby in Hampden (829), Hampshire (378), and Franklin (146) Counties, and less than 1% (362) elsewhere in the state.

“Border-hopping” Berkshire workers are as likely to cross state borders (New York, Connecticut, or Vermont) as county borders to work. Neighboring states

The MAP on the facing page summarizes major cross-border state and county flows.

drew in workers from the Berkshires, with New York workplaces attracting 1,334 (2% of Berkshire resident workers) to Columbia (345), Albany (281), New York (223), Rensselaer (121), and 17 other Counties and job locations.

Of the 991 (1.5%) Berkshire workers in Connecticut, 711 commuted to worksites in Litchfield County bordering southern Berkshire towns. At the northern border of the county, 378 Berkshire workers (.6%) crossed into Vermont, largely to work in Bennington County (330). A scattering of Berkshire residents (254) reported working in 18 other states across the U.S. during the “reference week” in 2000 at Census time, and 16 Berkshire residents were working abroad.

AT WORK IN BERKSHIRE COUNTY

Workers at jobs in the Berkshires totaled 65,879, with the 59,386 Berkshire residents, (as noted above) *living and working in the region* forming the core (90%) of workers. Adding to that core of Berkshire workers were an additional 2,246 workers (3.4%) from non-Berkshire Massachusetts counties commuting west into the region. Workers from Hampden (867), Hampshire (756), and Franklin (234) Counties comprised most (1,857) of that westward flow, almost 3% of all who worked in the region during the spring Census 2000 count.

**Working at Jobs in Berkshire County: 65,879
59,386 Berkshire Residents (90% of Workers)
6,493 Workers Commute into County (10%)**

The Berkshires gained workers from 2 of our 3 neighboring states and all 3 contiguous Massachusetts counties. Massachusetts on the whole drew in more workers from neighboring states than it saw workers leave.

Adding to the County’s workforce total: 2,557 (4%) workers from New York state, 1,175 (almost 2%) from Vermont, and 339 (.5%) crossing into Berkshire County from Connecticut. The **Map** shows the net effect of workers commuting to and from surrounding states and counties.

While 7% of Berkshire Resident Workers cross county or state borders for employment, 10% of Workers in regional jobs reside outside the county.

New York’s Columbia (1,187) and Rensselaer (818) Counties sent substantially more workers (2,005) into Berkshire County than they received (466). The opposite was true for the *Capital*

District of Albany County, which benefited from more workers (281) arriving from, than commuting to, the Berkshires (149).

A substantial contingent of Vermont workers (1,175) headed south for work in the Berkshires, outnumbering Berkshire residents (378) working north of the border. Connecticut drained workers from the region: the Berkshires losing twice the number of workers to bordering Litchfield County than entered from Connecticut to work. □

**Net Effect of Regional Commuting: +1,821
More Workers (6,493) commute into the Berkshires than out (4,672) for work.**

WORK FORCE CHANGES FROM 1990 TO 2000

RESIDENT WORKERS

According to JTW data from the 1990 Census, the number of resident workers in Berkshire County was 63,607, with 59,890 (94%) working in the region, and 3,717 (5.8%) at work elsewhere. Between 1990 and 2000 the number of resident workers increased by 451 (less than 1%), a remarkable contrast to the loss of total population (-4,399; -3.2%) and decline in the age 16 and over population (-2786; -2.5%).

That slight resident worker increase, in contrast to the population decline, indicates that the resident Work Force has held steady. Due to the population decline, the number employed, while showing little real change, inched higher, approaching 50% of the total regional population.

Of concern are changes in the number and percent of resident workers working in the county, compared to those commuting out. From 1990 to 2000 the number of resident workers living and working in the region declined by 504, (less than -1%)). But almost 1,000 more workers than in 1990 were now exiting the region to work — an increase of 26%.

**Berkshire County Changes:
Summary Table on page 4**

These Berkshire County trends are in sharp contrast to changes in the Commonwealth over the last decade. In Massachusetts total population grew 5.5% and the age 16 and over population increased by more than 200,000 (+4.2%). Along with these increases, the number employed grew by 4.4% (though lost share due to population growth). During the same period the number of resident workers increased by 123,243 (+4.1%). Between 1990 and 2000 the state of Massachusetts even saw the ratio of workers in the state to resident workers increase — a sign of its magnetism to outside workers.

Berkshire County Changes: 1990 to 2000

**Number of Resident Workers: +.7%
Work in County: -.8%
Work outside County: +25.7%**

WORKERS

Along with changes in resident workers, changes in the number of workers at work in the Berkshire region – a proxy for “jobs” (though not all jobs as noted earlier) – indicate reasons for

concern as well. The number of workers increased by 262 (about half a percent), and among these, resident workers declined as noted above. However, the number of workers commuting into the region showed a substantial increase of 766 (+13.4%).

Since 1990 the negligible additional number of people working in the region (as counted in the JTW 2000 dataset) has been overshadowed by the increase in workers commuting into the region to fill jobs. The net change in worker migration (resident workers commuting out versus outside workers entering) from 1990 to 2000 is ominous as well: a positive gain of 2,010 workers in 1990 dropping to a less positive 1,821 (-189; -9.4%). Census 2000 data also showed a severe decline in the overall number in the labor force since 1990: a loss of 1,157 (-1.7%) as the number went from a high of 69,963 to 68,806.

The slight gain in resident workers coupled with the increased number commuting to work outside the region and overall loss of population, points to Work Force out-migration, only partly offset by in-migration of commuting workers.

Massachusetts Work Force indicators are heading in another direction. Overall workers ("jobs") increased by 4.6%, reflecting increases in resident workers and additional in-migration of workers since 1990. □

RE-DEFINING THE REGIONAL WORK FORCE

While on the surface the size of the Berkshire Work Force remains steady, the loss of resident workers and the increasing number of resident workers leaving the region for work offer further evidence of a difficult labor market and constrained Work Force. The need for additional workers is clear from the increasing number of workers commuting into the region to fill those jobs.

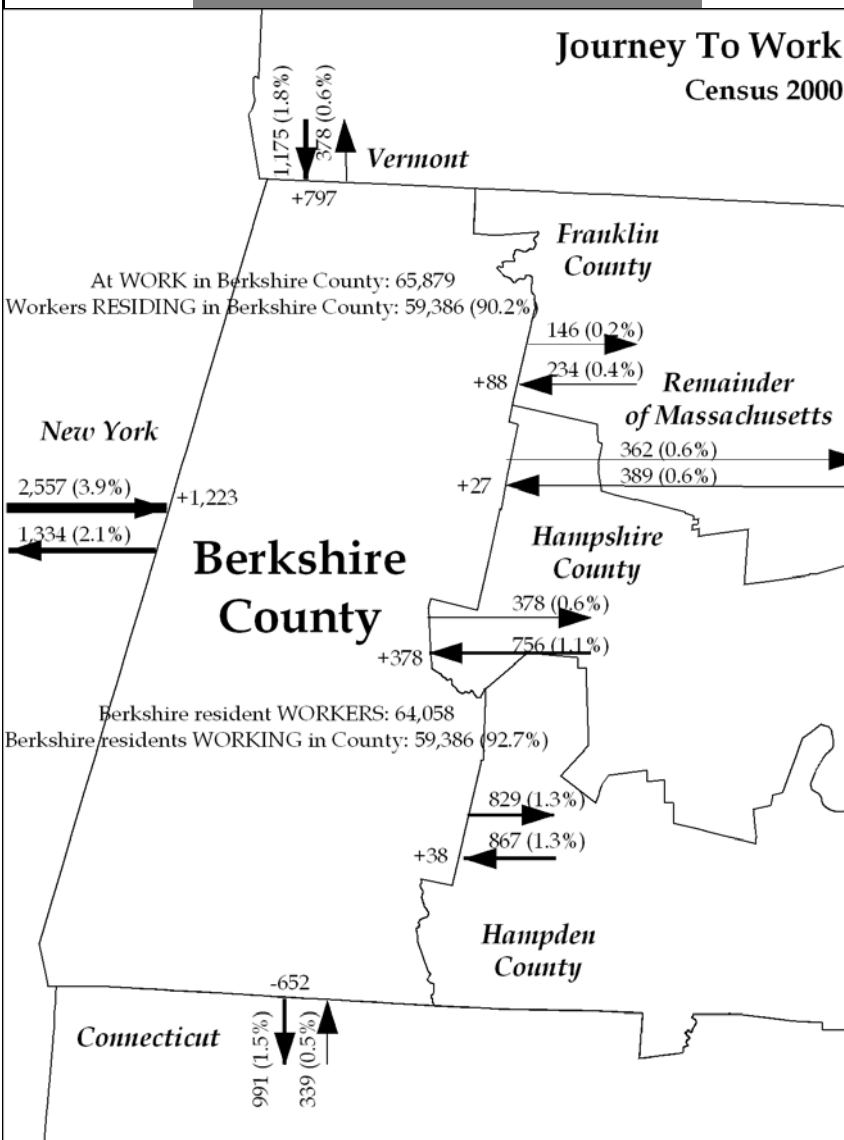
More problems ahead are suggested by the significantly higher median age of Berkshire residents and the age of the region's Work Force. Regional demographics suggest that the need for additional workers will become more critical for the Berkshire region sooner as the "boomer generation" heads into retirement and the need for replacement workers heats up.

The number of workers already commuting into the Berkshires belies the notion that the region's boundaries also outline its "Work Force shed." Work Force flows across regional borders indicate an existing attraction to jobs in the region. The pathway to attracting additional workers to work sites (and homes) in the Berkshires from adjacent states and counties is already seeing traffic.

What the numbers don't tell is why workers commute into or out of a region: match or mismatch between worker skills and job opportunities? Better benefits, higher wages, or opportunities for advancement here or elsewhere? Personal or family preferences related to community? Availability and affordability of housing? Schools and other regional amenities? Regional attractiveness to outside workers hinges on overcoming barriers and enhancing incentives to compensate for additional travel time, or a less convenient commute.

Additional JTW data on workers is expected to be released later this year with details on worker occupations, income, and other characteristics and factors pertinent to workforce migration which can help fill in gaps in the region's Work Force picture. □

Regional Implications
Workforce Trends and Issues



Bureau of Economic Analysis estimates total employment in the Berkshire region at 80,000.

Berkshire County Work Force Population Changes

Berkshire County	1990	% Share[^]	2000	% Share[^]	Change: % Change	
Population	139,352		134,953		-4,399	-3.2%
Population 16+	111,252	79.8%	108,466	80.4%	-2,786	-2.5%
Labor Force	69,963	50.2%	68,806	51.0%	-1,157	-1.7%
Employed	65,136	46.7%	65,253	48.4%	117	0.2%
Resident Workers	63,607	45.6%	64,058	47.5%	451	0.7%
<i>Work in county</i>	59,890	94.2%	59,386	92.7%	-504	-0.8%
<i>Work outside</i>	3,717	5.8%	4,672	7.3%	955	25.7%
Workers	65,617	47.1%	65,879	48.8%	262	0.4%
<i>Residents</i>	59,890	91.3%	59,386	90.5%	-504	-0.8%
<i>Commute In</i>	5,727	8.7%	6,493	9.9%	766	13.4%
Berkshire NET	2,010		1,821		-189	-9.4%

[^] % Share: % of Population **BOLD**; % of Resident Workers or Workers *ITALICS*

Berkshire Workers: Place of Residence

The adjacent Table summarizes the number of workers living in each Berkshire community, the mean or average travel time to their places of work, and the percent of workers who work outside of Berkshire County. Note that community differences in the average travel time of workers are a function of both community location and regional topography, roadway/highway access, and personal preferences for communities, housing, schools, and travel mode.

In general, workers in Sandisfield, Savoy, Becket, and Otis face the longest commute times. Not surprisingly, Williamstown and Pittsfield workers, the least. Overall, Berkshire commuters spend less time traveling to work (about 19 minutes), less than 3/4 of the average time spent by Massachusetts and U.S. workers. In this case, "less" is "more" – less time spent in travel to work means more time to spend in other ways: at work or in recreation, with family and friends. Since these average travel times represent only *one way* in a worker's daily commute – that difference in time (doubled) adds up as a personal benefit and a regional advantage.

The top quarter of communities with the highest percent of workers at locations outside the county were communities in the Great Barrington Labor Market Area. In contrast, workers living in the Pittsfield MSA or in the region's largest communities saw the lowest percent of residents working outside the Berkshires. □

SOURCES:

U.S. Census Bureau (1990 & Census 2000);
Dept. of Labor; Bureau of Economic Analysis;
U.S. Dept. of Transportation, CTPP listserve
(N. Srinivasan and C. Purvis);
MA Division of Employment and Training

Berkshire Workers (16 and over)		Avg Minutes Travel Time To Work	Percent Worked Outside County
Resident Community	Resident Workers		
Adams	3,988	21.5	4.8
Alford	199	21.8	16.6
Becket	848	31.4	15.4
Cheshire	1,709	22.1	4.2
Clarksburg	842	18.8	6.9
Dalton	3,382	17.7	6.0
Egremont	718	22.5	15.7
Florida	351	29.2	12.5
Great Barrington	3,681	21.1	8.8
Hancock	359	26.0	12.0
Hinsdale	936	22.7	2.5
Lanesborough	1,607	19.6	7.7
Lee	3,192	17.4	6.5
Lenox	2,368	15.5	4.7
Monterey	487	25.9	20.3
Mount Washington	81	28.5	23.5
New Ashford	138	19.8	9.4
New Marlborough	744	23.4	21.8
North Adams	6,644	18.4	5.2
Otis	685	31.3	30.8
Peru	418	29.4	7.4
Pittsfield	20,846	17.1	4.8
Richmond	866	24.1	7.3
Sandisfield	405	37.0	32.3
Savoy	345	31.8	12.2
Sheffield	1,721	22.6	22.5
Stockbridge	1,179	18.1	5.5
Tyringham	223	19.4	7.2
Washington	280	27.8	7.9
West Stockbridge	719	25.4	10.7
Williamstown	3,648	13.6	6.9
Windsor	449	25.4	11.1
Berkshire County	64,058	19.2	7.3
Pittsfield MSA	40,073	18.1	Source:
Massachusetts	3,102,837	27.0	US Census Bureau
United States	128,279,228	25.5	SF3, Census 2000