

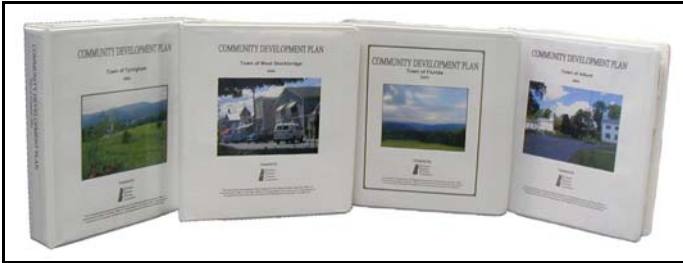


# Common Ground

Berkshire  
Regional  
Planning  
Commission

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 2 SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2004

## BRPC Wraps Up Successful Multi-Year Community Development Plan Program



Four of the Community Development Plans BRPC produced under the successful multi-year CDP program, after more than 120 public meetings and other planning sessions in communities throughout the region.

After nearly three years of hard work and over 120 public meetings in 24 different communities, the Community Development Plan (CDP) Program finally concluded in July 2004. Each of the 24 participating communities completed a Community Development Plan document. Several communities, such as Adams, Alford, Florida, Monterey, Savoy, and Tyringham, were also able to complete new or updated Open Space Plans using the CDP Program funds. Two participating communities, Sheffield and Williamstown, were able to complete Master Plans by using the CDP Program funds to supplement other local or state program funds. For some communities, such as New Ashford and Hancock, this was the first effort at creating a comprehensive planning document.

Other communities with existing Town Plans, such as Stockbridge, Richmond, Egremont, and Otis were able to use the CDP program funds to implement certain aspects of their Town Plans. For example, Stockbridge used some of its CDP funds to do a site assessment of an aging industrial park and for preliminary site-work for the Pine-woods Affordable Housing project. Richmond was able to complete a project evaluation of the Richmond Shores area to document water quality issues and eventually apply for a state loan to extend its sewer system to that area. Egremont used its CDP funds to perform a com-

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Also Inside this Issue:

The U.S. EPA Awards BRPC a \$100,000 Brownfields Assessment Grant. *(See Brownfields, page 3)*

BRPC Wins 2 Section 319 Grants for Windsor Reservoir and Pontoosuc Lake. *(See Section 319 Grants, page 3)*

New Berkshire population numbers and analysis of update census figures for 2004. *(See Berkshire Population, page 5)*

## Commonwealth Capital Applications Deadline Coming September 30, 2004

Effective July 1, 2004, the Massachusetts Office of Commonwealth Development implemented the Commonwealth Capital Initiative (CCI). Under the CCI, various grant and loan programs of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA), Executive Office of Transportation (EOT), Executive Office of Administration & Finance (EOAF), and the Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) award points to communities applying for competitive state grants and loans based on the municipality's Commonwealth Capital Application score. The score is determined by each municipality's compliance with or commitments to a checklist of 24 planning items in 8 state-approved sustainable development categories.

BRPC hosted a meeting of municipal officials with Kurt Gaertner, Director of Sustainable Development for EOEA. Officials from seven communities attended, along with representatives of several land trusts. Mr. Gaertner explained that the program was created to try to focus state grant and loan resources

*(Continued on page 2)*

COMMONWEALTH CAPITAL APPLICATION		
Municipality:	Email:	Date:
Name:	Title:	Phone:
Please attach to this application a letter signed by the municipality's chief elected official designating a point of contact and outlining how the community has met, or seeks a binding commitment to, the following criteria. For zoning purposes, please cite the zoning bylaws or ordinance and submit a zoning map. For non-zoning criteria or recently passed zoning, provide a copy of pertinent plans, bylaws, appropriations, maps or other documentation. Electronic submissions are preferred. See Application guidance for additional details and a sample letter.		
<b>1. PROMOTE COMPACT DEVELOPMENT (42)</b>		<b>Existing</b> <b>Commit</b>
a. Minimize sprawl through zoning for additional growth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Zoning for accessory units	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Zoning allowing, or in right, multi-family dwellings (not age restricted)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. If capacity exists within such districts for the equivalent of ~20% of existing units in the community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Zoning for clustered development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. If zoning is amended, as of right, or has been utilized in the past 12 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Zoning for transfer of development rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Zoning allowing new development to existing water and sewer network	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2. EXPAND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES (33)</b>		
a. Executive Order 418 Housing Certification, including, where applicable, regional certification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. DMC to approve affordable housing plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Attainment of the affordable housing goal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Zoning requiring the inclusion of affordable units	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Local financing or use of appropriate municipally-owned land	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3. REUTILIZE BROWNFIELD AND ABANDONED BUILDINGS (12)</b>		
a. Incentive for brownfield assessment and/or funding, site remediation, or reuse strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Incentive for brownfield assessment and/or funding, site remediation, or reuse strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4. PLAN FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES (10)</b>		
a. Current Master Plan or Executive Order 418 Community Development Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. If zoning is consistent with the plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. If plan and zoning are consistent with relevant Regional Policy Plan (where available)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Current LC-Approved Open Space and Recreation Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>5. PROMOTE LIVABLE COMMUNITIES (12)</b>		
a. Adoption of Community Preservation Act or Land Bank, or recent passage of municipal bond authorization or significant funding for open space protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Protection of 15-20% of land area by a permanent Chapter 184-type restriction or fee-simple Article 97 type acquisition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. If 20% of land area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. If a restriction or fee acquisition occurred in the past 12 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. If a restriction or fee acquisition was undertaken jointly with a land trust in past 12 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>6. ADVANCE SOUND WATER POLICY (12)</b>		
a. Water Conservation Plan consistent with the Water Conservation Standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Implementation of Executive Order 418, 101-110 techniques, or other water resource measures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Integrated Water Resources Management Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>7. PRESERVE WORKING NATURAL LANDSCAPES (12)</b>		
a. Right-to-farm law	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Zoning for agricultural and forestry uses (>10 acres per dwelling unit)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Zoning agricultural commitment or use of Ch. 21A or 21B zoning for first refusal in last 2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>8. PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT VIA OTHER ACTIONS (2)</b>		
a. Existing or commitment to local measures or actions not listed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>TOTAL BOTH EXISTING &amp; COMMIT POINTS (MAX. 140)</b>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

The Commonwealth Capital Application checklist lays out 24 planning items in 8 sustainable development categories. Towns score points, which will count towards 20% of certain state grant and loan competitions, based on existing compliance and future commitments.

**CDP Wrap Up** (Continued from page 1)

plete update of local zoning by-laws. Otis used some its funds to prepare conceptual designs for a local Community Center facility. Some communities, such as West Stockbridge were able to develop affordable housing strategies and successfully secure Executive Order 418 housing certification. Many of the participating communities, such as Lee and Becket were able to develop Bike and Pedestrian Trail Plans. Several communities, such as Peru and Hinsdale, also drafted Official Maps and Status of Roads Maps.

A number of the participating communities, such as Clarksburg, Savoy and Dalton, were able to leverage their CDP funds into much larger grants. For example Clarksburg received a \$50,000 Ready Resource Fund (RRF) grant to develop fire protection designs for the Clarksburg Mill Site. Savoy used its CDP transportation funds to develop a Small Town Roads Assistance Program (STRAP) grant application and was eventually awarded \$500,000 to make improvements to State Road and Chapel Road. Dalton was able to build upon its CDP activities by applying for and receiving a \$250,000 Community Development Fund (CDF) grant to improve building facades in their downtown area. The City of Pittsfield used its funds to update sections of its aging Open Space Plan and to perform a general analysis of its key neighborhoods. The City of North Adams performed a detailed housing study of the Bracewell Avenue neighborhood area and performed a transportation and economic development study of part of the Route 8 Corridor. The Town of Lenox was able to use its CDP funds to develop streetscaping designs for the downtown area and to draft a cluster development by-law.

Thanks to the enthusiasm, commitment and strong participation of the numerous CDP Advisory Committees, the CDP Program is a tremendous success. It has provided the participating communities in our region with a planning document that will contribute to well-informed land-use decisions. Additionally, the effort will improve these communities' competitiveness for state program funding, which should lead to implementation of the numerous planning ideas and concepts developed through the CDP process. Thanks also go to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA), the Executive Office of Transportation and Construction (EOTC) and the Department of Economic Development for their continuing support and funding of the CDP Program. *Contact: Bryan Boeskin*

**Commonwealth Capital Applications** (Continued from page 1)

where growth could occur with fewer impacts and costs, such as in downtown areas in towns and cities. It also is an attempt to facilitate the construction or preservation of additional housing, which is a critical need in the Commonwealth. Communities submitting Commonwealth Capital applications will be accounting for the smart growth techniques they are currently using and how many additional ones they are willing to commit to bring to the local legislative body within 12 months.

The affected state programs, many of which are used commonly by towns and cities in the Berkshires, are:

- Public Works Economic Development (PWED) – EOT
- Community Development Action Grant (CDAG) – DHCD
- Transit Node Grant Program - DHCD
- DEP Brownfields Program – EOEA-DEP
- Off-Street Parking Program - EOAF
- State Revolving Fund (sewer and water) – EOEA-DEP
- Self-Help Program – EOEA
- Urban Self-Help Program – EOEA
- Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program (APR) – EOEA-DAR
- Other Land Protection Programs – EOEA-DCR/DFG

For these programs, 20% of the project scoring will be based on the community's Commonwealth Capital score. For projects being submitted by other entities in a community, such as water, sewer or fire districts or local land trusts, the municipal government must still have submitted the application for the scoring in order for the project to receive any of the 20%.

BRPC, with financial support from the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, was able to offer assistance in preparing applications to 11 Berkshire municipalities. Those that requested direct assistance are Adams, Alford, Egremont, Great Barrington, Hinsdale, Lee, New Marlborough, Peru, Pittsfield, Savoy, and Sheffield. The applications are due September 30<sup>th</sup>. *Contact: Bryan Boeskin*



The answer to May/June's trivia question, "**Where in the Berkshires** is the highest elevation town hall in Massachusetts?" is...Peru, where the Town Hall sits at 2,030 feet above sea level.

## Programs, Projects and Grants

### Grant Opportunities

#### 2005 Heritage Tree Care Grants

These grants, offered by the Massachusetts DCR Urban and Community Forestry Program, provide competitive matching grants of up to \$5,000 to communities wishing to provide professional care for large or unique "heritage trees" located on public property. Heritage trees are those larger trees (>32" in diameter) that have documented historical significance or champion status. Heritage grants provide funds to hire a Certified Arborist to prune, cable, and fertilize such trees. Communities that have a core tree care program in place, or have conducted a public program to identify their heritage trees are favored for funding. The applications will be due by October 22, 2004 for tree work that will occur during the winter. The application and a list of recent grants will be posted at [www.state.ma.us/dem/programs/forestry/urban/urbanGrants.htm](http://www.state.ma.us/dem/programs/forestry/urban/urbanGrants.htm). Alternatively, contact Eric Seaborn for application materials at (617) 626-1468 or at [eric.seaborn@state.ma.us](mailto:eric.seaborn@state.ma.us).

#### BRPC Wins Section 319 Grants for Windsor Reservoir and Pontoosuc Lake

On July 30, 2004, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) recommended two Berkshire proposals to the U.S. EPA Section 319 Nonpoint Source Pollution Grant Program: the Windsor Reservoir Restoration Project and the Pontoosuc Lake Watershed Planning Program.

Section 319 of the *Clean Water Act of 1987* was established as a national program to control nonpoint sources of water pollution. Each year, in conjunction with the U.S. EPA, the DEP provides 319 funds for projects that address prevention, control and abatement of nonpoint source (NPS) pollution and that restore beneficial uses to bodies of water and/or help them meet or maintain state water quality standards. The Section 319 Program is a matching grant program; 60% of the total project cost is funded by DEP while the remaining 40% is contributed in matching funds through cash or in-kind services. BRPC has partnered with the Dalton Fire District and the Friends of Pontoosuc Watershed Corporation to secure funding for this year's two 319 projects.

The Windsor Reservoir Restoration Project is the first phase of a multi-phase program to restore Windsor Reservoir, an approximately 62-acre drinking water reservoir, located in the towns of Hinsdale and Windsor, that serves as the primary drinking water supply for the Town of Dalton. In August 2003 unusually severe storms caused flash flooding along the many tributary streams flowing down the west side of the Berkshire Hills and eroded dirt roads in the Dalton/Windsor vicinity. The overflow of a feeder brook rendered Wahconah Falls Road impassible. Sediments from the roadway erosion entered the reservoir, and the resulting turbidity forced the shut down of water supply delivery operations. The water treatment plant re-

(Continued on page 4)

#### BRPC Awarded \$100,000 in Brownfield Assessment Funds from U.S. EPA

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently selected BRPC for a brownfield assessment grant. The goal of BRPC's program is to inventory, evaluate, prioritize, and assess sites within the target area based on a standardized set of risk characteristics and redevelopment criteria, leading to the redevelopment and reuse of sites in order to maximize economic and environmental benefits within the region. BRPC will also conduct public outreach and education as well as create a formal regional brownfields Steering Committee.

Once established, the Steering Committee will be responsible for developing a region wide inventory of petroleum-related brownfield sites. Following the inventory process, a select number of properties will undergo Phase I site assessments in order to obtain site specific sample data to determine the sites' real environmental conditions and risks to human health. A smaller subset will undergo Phase II site assessments.

Contact: Joellyn Warren.

#### Dam Safety Workshop September 14<sup>th</sup>

BRPC, partnering with the Mass. Office of Dam Safety, is offering a workshop on Dam Safety and Emergency Response on Sept. 14<sup>th</sup>. The workshop will focus on emergency plan preparation, disaster response and dam owner responsibilities. The workshop is intended for local Emergency Management Personnel and dam owners, and is being offered to interested parties in all four Western Mass. counties. The workshop is being offered as an afternoon or evening session, and is being held at the Clarion Hotel and Conference Center in Northampton.

Berkshire County has several dams that are of concern, either because they are considered High Hazard dams (where failure or improper operation will likely cause loss of life and serious property damage) or because their condition is deteriorated to the point that they are unsafe. The issue of dam safety has arisen as BRPC staff work on the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. To register for the workshop, please call BRPC Secretary Debbie Polito at 442-1521.

## TRANSPORTATION UPDATE

- The amendment to the 2004-2008 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) described in the last issue of *Common Ground* was approved by the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on August 3. In addition to delaying three bridges and a highway project from 2004 and advancing another highway project into 2004, the amendment also added a new project to 2004 to install signals at the intersection of Route 7 and Monument Valley Road to regulate traffic generated by the new schools being built there.
- The BRPC Transportation Committee's recommended draft 2005-2009 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) was released for public comment by the Berkshire MPO on August 3. Copies of the draft TIP can be obtained by calling BRPC at 413-442-1521. Documentation of the evaluation of projects is also available. Comments are due by September 7, and the MPO will vote September 8. On approving the final TIP. Highlights in the early years include safety improvements at the intersection of routes 7 and 20 in Lenox, reconstruction and improvement of South Street in Dalton, sidewalk enhancements in Stockbridge and installation of new bus shelters.
- The Intermodal Transportation Center in downtown Pittsfield is scheduled for occupancy by BRTA in September 2004. BRTA buses will begin using the facility on October 1. The Transportation Center will also be served by intercity buses and Amtrak trains. BRTA buses currently originating in front of the (former) CVS on North Street, and on Park Square near the popcorn wagon will originate at the new facility, where passengers will be able to wait indoors. However, buses will still make stops at the former locations on demand. *Contact: Andrew Lenton*



The BRTA Intermodal Transportation Center (shown from Persip Park on North Street in Pittsfield) is scheduled for occupancy in September with buses running out of the center October 1, 2004.

### Section 319 Grants *(Continued from page 3)*

mains off-line indefinitely, until turbidity standards can be met.

The dirt road erosion perpetuates raw water turbidity problems, particularly since the roadway has not been repaired. In addition, significant amounts of sediment and debris have been deposited in the reservoir and near the reservoir shoreline. The road repairs must be completed to prevent further erosion of road material from entering Windsor Reservoir. Total funding for the project is \$150,000. The Dalton Fire District will work with BRPC to implement this project.

The Pontoosuc Lake Watershed Planning Program is a combination of research, monitoring, planning, implementation and educational activities building on previous projects and partnerships conducted over the past several years in the Pontoosuc Lake Watershed. In addition to building on the previous 319 projects, the partners in this project will build on the Massachusetts Buffer Manual and Demonstration Project. Project goals include continuing the current efforts to improve water quality in the lake, expanding the current efforts to include a comprehensive watershed-based approach toward lake management activities, and conducting an education and outreach campaign to promote the use of best management practices throughout the watershed.

The individual elements of this project strategy focus on the development, implementation or monitoring of a Watershed-based Plan. Project tasks include the development of the watershed-based plan, development of a DEP/EPA approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) to govern environmental monitoring and data collection, organization of a lake watershed survey, installation of lake-side vegetated buffers, and the development of an education and outreach program. Total funding for the project is \$110,350. BRPC will partner with the Pontoosuc Lake Watershed Corporation to complete this project. *Contact: Melissa Jette*

### Term of the Month

#### ***SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (STP)***

STP is the federal highway funding category that is used for most federal aid highway projects in the Berkshires. The federal share is 80 percent and the State share is 20 percent. Eligible projects include construction or capital improvement of roads, bridges and intersections that are on the federal aid highway system, consisting mostly of arterial and collector roads. STP funds can also be "flexed" to transit projects at the region's discretion, but that option is generally not used. STP is also the source of the ten percent set aside for "Enhancements", which was the term of the month in the last issue of *Common Ground*.

**Clearinghouse Reviews**

The following comments were submitted under the direction of the Clearinghouse Review Committee between June 25, 2004 and August 13, 2004.

- Hoosic Water Quality District Wastewater Treatment Facility Long-Term Improvements (Williamstown). Comments on the Environmental Notification Form were submitted August 13, 2004.

**BRPCConnections**

<i>Web Site</i>	<b>www.berkshireplanning.org</b>
<i>Electronic Mail</i>	<b>BRPC@berkshireplanning.org</b>
<i>Chair</i>	Samuel Haupt
<i>Executive Director</i>	Nathaniel W. Karns, AICP
<i>Assistant Director</i>	Thomas Matuszko, AICP
<i>Transportation Manager</i>	Andrew Lenton, AICP
<i>Senior Planners</i>	Joellyn Warren Bryan Boeskin Lauren Gaherty Anuja Koirala
<i>Planner</i>	Melissa Jette
<i>Traffic Planner</i>	Ravindra Wijesundera
<i>GIS Coordinator</i>	Mark Maloy
<i>Associate Planner</i>	Pete Falcier
<i>Planning Associate</i>	Kate McNulty-Vaughan
<i>Bookkeeper</i>	Carolyn LeBlanc
<i>Secretary</i>	Debbie Polito
<i>Office Administrator</i>	Joyce McGuire

**Date CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

- **Tues—September 14—Dam Safety Workshop—Clarion Hotel, Northampton, MA—1-4 PM or 6-9 PM**
- **Thurs—September 16—BRPC Full Commission Meeting—BRPC offices— 7:30 PM**
- **Wed—October 6—Executive Committee Meeting—BRPC offices— 3:30 PM**

**WELCOME NEW DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES**

There will be an orientation session for new delegates and alternates at 6:45 PM, preceding the September 16th Commission meeting. We hope to see you there.

<b>Adams</b>	Sandra Moderski	<b>New Ashford</b>	Kevin Flicker
<b>Clarksburg</b>	Dave Delano	<b>Otis</b>	Chaffee Clayton
<b>Egremont</b>	Charles Proctor	<b>Sheffield</b>	Frederic Gordon
<b>Great Barrington</b>	Sean Stanton	<b>Washington</b>	Michele Beemer
<b>Lanesborough</b>	John Hickey	<b>Windsor</b>	Arthur Needham
<b>Lenox</b>	Franki Mahoney		

Presorted  
 Standard  
 U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
 Permit No. 4  
 Pittsfield, MA

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission  
 1 Fenn Street, Suite 201  
 Pittsfield, Massachusetts 01201  
**Common Ground**