

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
1 FENN STREET, SUITE 201, PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS 01201
TELEPHONE (413) 442-1521 · FAX (413) 442-1523
Massachusetts Relay Service: TTY: 771 or 1-800-439-2370
www.berkshireplanning.org

JAMES MULLEN, Chair
SHEILA IRVIN, Vice-Chair
GALE LABELLE, Clerk
CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

NATHANIEL W. KARNS, A.I.C.P.
Executive Director

**Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee**

*Tuesday, February 15, 2011, 12:30 PM
2nd Floor Conference Room, BRPC Office, 1 Fenn Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201*

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes (January 25, 2011)
3. Public Comments (Non-Agenda Items)
4. 2011 CEDS – Berkshire CEDS Project Priorities
 - a. Regional Criteria Evaluation/Scoring Results
 - b. EDA Criteria Evaluation/Scoring Results
 - c. Ranking Structure
5. 2011 CEDS – Implementation
6. 2011 CEDS – State Cooperation, Consistency and Integration
7. Next Meeting (Tuesday, March 8th, 2011 at 12:30pm)
8. Other Items?
9. Adjournment

City and Town Clerks: Please post this notice pursuant to M.G.L., Chapter 39, Section 23B

In case of inclement weather, please call (413)442-1521 x15 to learn if your meeting is still scheduled.

JAMES MULLEN, Chair
SHEILA IRVIN, Vice-Chair
GALE LABELLE, Clerk
CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

NATHANIEL W. KARNS, A.I.C.P.
Executive Director

**Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee**

Tuesday, January 25, 2011, 12:30 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room, BRPC Office, 1 Fenn Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201

Committee Members

Kristine Hazzard X Roger Bolton X Heather Boulger AB Marya LaRoche X Kevin O'Donnell X
Keith Girouard X Mike Nuvalie X Laury Epstein X Mike Supranowicz X Lauri Klefos X
Michael Hoffmann X Christine Ludwizewski X Eleanore Velez X Deanna Ruffer AB
Ann Dobrowolski (Alt) X Helena Fruscio X Tim Geller X Robert Wilson AB Brenda Burdick X
Mark Berman X

BRPC Staff

Nathaniel Karns X Thomas Matuszko X Daniel Sexton X Mark Maloy X

Public

Allison Johnson X

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order

The January 25, 2011 meeting of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Strategy Committee was convened at 12:33 pm. Mr. Matuszko explained that this was the fourth CEDS Strategy Committee meeting held. He then explained that he would be the moderator for this meeting and that the meeting was being recorded in accordance with the Open Meeting law. Mr. Matuszko then asked if there was anyone present whom wished to record the meeting as well. Seeing none the meeting began.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Matuszko asked for approval of the meeting minutes from the January 11, 2011 meeting of the CEDS Strategy Committee.

Mr. Berman made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Mr. O'Donnell. Mr. Matuszko then asked for unanimous consent, seeing no objections the motion passed.

3. Public Comments (Non-Agenda Items)

Mr. Matuszko then explained that this was a public meeting being held by Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and asked if there was anyone present whom wished to speak on any non-agenda items? Seeing none, Mr. Matuszko then moved the discussion to the goals and objectives agenda item.

4. 2011 CEDS – Goals and Objectives for the Berkshires

Mr. Matuszko began by explaining that the proposed goals and objectives language before the Committee have been revised. The revised language takes into account comments and concerns raised by the Committee at the last meeting. He then mentioned that staff had distributed the proposed language to Committee members, prior to the meeting, to gather additional input. A number of Committee members did provide input, of which staff incorporated those comments into the language before the Committee today. Mr. Matuszko then explained that staff wanted to focus the discussion on the content of the proposed language. He also mentioned that staff wanted to make sure they were headed in the right direction and if the Committee saw fit, make a motion to approve the goals and objective.

Mr. Matuszko then discussed in more specific terms what the revisions consisted of. He explained that the language had been broadened so the statements were more general. He also mentioned that the generalizing of the goals and objectives language would allow for more specific discussion or direction to be incorporated into the action items (or the meat of the CEDS report). As the discussion of this sections language commenced, Mr. Matuszko encouraged Committee members to be thinking of potential action items that would fit under the goals and objectives.

With that said, Mr. Sexton initiated the discussion of the goals. He began by restating the Vision Statement and the general definition for the "New Economy" that the Committee had established at the last meeting. There were some concerns raised by Committee members regarding the proposed New Economy definition, specifically the term "Digital Economy" and where the definition should be located in the report. After briefly discussing the use of the term "Digital Economy," the Committee determined that the use of the Kauffman report and its definition could remain. As part of this decision, the Committee asked that staff incorporate a more detail definition of the five categories from the Kauffman report as an appendix.

To reinforce this decision, Mr. Matuszko asked the Committee for unanimous consent to incorporate an appendix with the definitions of the categories from the Kauffman report. Seeing no objections the decision was approved.

Following this discussion, M. Matuszko began talking about the six proposed goals. He first highlighted the context or focus of each goal: Goal 1) an overall regional process; Goal 2) the right information to obtain; Goal 3) the region's competitiveness, Goal 4) infrastructure to support economic development, Goal 5) a workforce to meet the needs of the region, and Goal 6) the redevelop/reuse of existing sites. Through these six goals, staff tried to capture and accommodate the concepts that embody the region's economic situation and shift.

The Committee then began to discussing each goal. The Committee's input provided through this discussion included:

- **It was asked whether the context of the goals included language that meets the EDA's investment priorities.** *Mr. Matuszko explained that in general terms, yes. He also mentioned that staff tried to develop language that balanced the needs of the EDA's funding programs, while also providing the leeway to pursue other funding programs and sources.*
- **It was mentioned that Goal 6 seemed more tactical then strategic and that it could be incorporated into Goal 4.** *Staff explained that the proposed language for this goal was intended to focus economic development through the reuse and redevelopment of existing site rather than suggesting there should be a focus on Greenfield development. A committee member mentioned that at the last meeting, it was highlighted that the lack of large tracts of developable land within the county was a weakness. In that context and through further discussion of the suggestion, by the Committee, it was agreed that Goal 6 should remain as a standalone goal.*
- **It was recommended that Goal 5 (Workforce) should become Goals 4 and then Goal 4 (Infrastructure) should become Goal 5.** *A follow-up discussion of this suggestion, by the Committee, determined that this suggestion should be made.*
- **It was recommended that certain language, such as "Public/Private Partnerships" and "Global Competitiveness," should be incorporated into the goals were appropriate.** *More specifically, this suggestion proposed the term "Public/Private Partnerships" be built into Objective 3 of Goal 1 and that the term "Global Economy" could be incorporated into Goal 3. During further discussion of this suggestion, it was mentioned that public/private partnerships are covered fairly well in the Objective 3 of Goal 1. However, there should be language added that extends our partnerships beyond the region, Some example language suggested was "beyond our borders." After further discussion of these suggestion, by the Committee, it was agreed the term "Global Economy" should be added to Goal 3 and that the phase "beyond our border" should be added to the third objective of Goal 1.*

- **It was recommended that a seventh goal be added, speaking more specifically to the Innovation and Creative side of the region's economy.** *This suggestion was based on the fact that there is a growing sector of the region's economy focused on innovation and creativity. Much like the redevelopment/reuse of old mill structures, the innovative and creative side of the economy has its own issues and development demands. It was mentioned that this type of language was already imbedded in Goal 3 and its subsequent objectives. During further discussion of this suggestion, by the Committee, it was determined that the addition of a seventh goal was not necessary since it was implied within other goals and objectives.*
- **It was recommended that if the intent was to use and define the "New Economy" as a major component of the CEDS, then the Committee may want to consider incorporating this term into the goals and objectives.** *A follow-up discussion of this suggestion, by the Committee, determined that the defining categories of the "New Economy" were already built-in or incorporated into the proposed goals and objectives; therefore it isn't necessary to restate the term.*

Mr. Matuszko then transitioned the discussion to the objectives language. The Committee's input on the proposed objectives included:

- **It was recommended that the last objective under Goal 6 should be incorporated under another goal.** *Following this suggestion, a discussion commenced to identify where the objective language should be incorporated or whether it was even necessary. The Committee suggested that if this objective was kept, the language should be modified. After considering some alternative language or concepts for the objective, it was suggested that the objective be moved to Goal 1. After further discussion, by the Committee, it was determined that last objective under Goal 6 should be moved to Goal 1 and re-worded to read, "Develop mechanisms to respond to unexpected economic losses."*
- **It was recommended that the word "other" should be should be added to the last objective of the new Goal 5.** *A follow-up discussion of this suggestion, by the Committee, determined that this suggestion should be made.*
- **It was then recommended that the word "cities" in the Objective 3 of the new Goal 5 should be deleted.** *A follow-up discussion of this suggestion, by the Committee, determined that this suggestion should be made.*
- **It was recommended that within the first objective of Goal 1, the words "mechanism" and "initiative" should become plural.** *This suggestion was intended to give more focus to the multiple economic development initiatives happening throughout the region and to the economic development initiatives being undertaken at the community level. A follow-up discussion, by the Committee, determined that this suggestion should be made.*

Mr. Matuszko then asked the Committee if there were any remaining questions or concerns. Seeing none, Mr. Matuszko asked for a motion approving the language as amended by the Committee.

Ms. Epstein made a motion to approve the proposed goals and objective as modified by the Committee. This motion was seconded by Mr. O'Donnell. Mr. Matuszko then asked for unanimous consent, seeing no objections the motion passed.

Mr. Matuszko then moved the discussion to the Project Priorities Evaluation agenda item.

5. 2011 CEDS – Berkshire CEDS Project Priorities (Evaluation/Scoring)

Mr. Sexton began by discussion how the project proposals were submitted and noted that 82 proposals had been received. Per a slide shown to the Committee, Mr. Matuszko explained that staff had placed each proposal into 4 sub-categories, which included Education/Workforce Development, Planning/Program Initiatives, Infrastructure and Physical Development. Mr. Sexton then explained that staff had consolidated or grouped a number of similar proposals under one consolidated proposal. This consolidation process was intended to reduce the number of duplicated projects the Committee would have to review and to streamline the evaluation/scoring process.

Before discussion of the evaluation/scoring process continued, staff requested that the Committee concur with the proposal to consolidate duplicate proposals. Seeing no objections, it was determined that the staff's consolidation of proposals was okay.

Mr. Matuszko then explained that the submitted project proposals contain varying levels of information. He mentioned that some project proponents were very diligent and descriptive in their application and that others were not so detailed. Staff explained that all applications were accepted regardless of content in an attempt to capture a broad sampling of the Region's economic development projects. Staff did conduct follow-up phone calls with

project proponents to gather additional information, which has been incorporated into the *Project Description Summary* document.

Mr. Sexton then discussed the proposed evaluation/scoring process. He mentioned that there are three categories of evaluation criteria. It was recommended that the Committee evaluate/score the first two categories (*Economic Significance to the Region* and *2011 CEDS Goals and Objectives*), while staff would conduct the evaluation/scoring of the third category (*EDA Investment Priorities*). Mr. Matuszko then asked the Committee if they were comfortable with the concept of allowing staff to conduct the evaluation/scoring of the EDA Investment Priorities. The Committee discussed the proposed evaluation/scoring process and determined it would be acceptable for BRPC staff to assess the project proposals against the EDA Investment Priorities.

It was suggested, by a Committee member, that Committee members be allowed the option to evaluate/score project proposals against the EDA Investment Priorities, just to see how Committee member's scores rank against staff's. There were no objections to this request.

A Committee member then asked how the criterion for the *Economic Significance of the Region* category was developed. Mr. Sexton explained that the language for this category was developed by staff. Staff utilized concepts and content from the 2001 and 2004 CEDS planning processes, but made a number of minor modifications to take into consideration regional economic changes and priorities.

A Committee member then asked how project proposals could be evaluated/scored with incomplete applications, data that was estimated, and in general criteria that is very subjective. A follow-up comment, made by another Committee member, explained that the evaluation/scoring process will be a subjective. Each Committee member brings their own knowledge and perspective to the evaluation/scoring process, staff explained. Committee members will be making judgment calls, when information or data is suspect. Staff cautioned that many projects will score low. Mr. Karns also noted that as the scoring and subsequent ranking of proposals progresses, the better project proposal will rise to the top.

The conversation then transitioned to how the project would actually be ranked. Mr. Sexton explained that the scores from each Committee member for each project proposal would be tabulated and that the median score for each project proposal would then be established. Staff then explained that the median score would be used to rank (or prioritize) the projects. Staff explained that a possible way to prioritize the projects could be to break them up into "High, Medium and Low" priorities. Until the proposal scores are submitted, however, staff won't be able to suggest where the break-up should be or whether there is another prioritization structure that may work better. A Committee member noted that the *Economic Significance to the Region* criteria were weighted higher than the *2011 CEDS Goals and Objectives* criteria. Mr. Matuszko explained that they were intentionally weighted higher because staff identified the *Economic Significance to the Region* criteria to be more important. Mr. Karns mentioned that if the Committee was not satisfied with the results of the scoring and ranking that the project proposals could be reassessed.

A Committee member then asked that all Committee members and staff be mindful of proposals that may be underdeveloped. These proposals may have been submitted by an individual, organization or group that doesn't possess the capacity or understanding of the process to submit a complete application. Mr. Matuszko followed by mentioning that the CEDS is envisioned as an ongoing process. Proposals that are underdeveloped, but that still hold some level of importance could be identified so staff could work with those project proponents to develop a better project application next time. Mr. Matuszko then reinforced, to everyone, the need to conduct consistent scoring. Since proposals are not being scored at a group level and in some instances Committee members will be scoring their own project proposal, Committee members will need to internally regulate and ensure that their scoring is consistent and fair.

A Committee member then asked whether there would be an opportunity to discuss the project proposals and descriptions at the Committee level, prior to scoring. Mr. Matuszko said, "No." It was then suggested, by a Committee member that a more in-depth discussion of proposals, to really flesh-out the projects, could be conducted at the next meeting. It was also mentioned that this follow-up discussion may help Committee members establish a ranking structure and to identify top projects. Staff explained that the majority of the submitted proposals would require some type of subsequent grant application and that none of these proposals will receive automatic funding. There was no decision made whether follow-up discussions would happen.

Mr. Karns urged the Committee to just evaluate/score the project proposals the best they can. Mr. Matuszko also recommended that Committee members utilize the project materials and information that has been provided to them.

A Committee member then asked whether the evaluation/scoring of project proposals would be completed today or outside of a Committee meeting. Staff explained that the evaluation and scoring of proposals would be taking place outside of a regular Committee meeting. Mr. Sexton said the scoring worksheet would be e-mail to all Committee

members by the Friday following the meeting. A Committee member then asked how long they would have to evaluate/score the proposals. Staff explained that if they wanted to review the results by the next meeting the completed scoring worksheets would need to be back to staff by February 9th or 10th. The Committee determined that Thursday, February 10th would be preferred.

Mr. Sexton asked whether the Committee wanted to discuss each criterion or to run through a hypothetical project proposal. Seeing no interest by the Committee, Mr. Sexton then asked if there were any additional questions. No addition items were proposed.

6. Next Meeting (Tuesday, February 15th, 2011 at 12:30pm)

The Committee agreed to hold the next CEDS Strategy Committee meeting on Tuesday, February 15, 2011 at 12:30pm.

7. Other Items?

No items were raised.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:10pm.

Documents distributed at the meeting included:

Meeting Agenda

Draft Minutes from the January 11, 2011 CEDS Strategy Committee meeting

A draft of *The Action Plan for Berkshire County's Economic Future, Goals and Objective* section

A copy of the *Berkshire CEDS Project Priorities - Evaluation/Scoring Framework*

A copy of the *Proposal Description Summary* spreadsheet

A copy of the *Project Proposal Packets* (on CD)

Update of Past CEDS Project

2004 CEDS Project Priorities

Projects	Project Status
Sites, Buildings, Entrepreneurial Development and Marketing	
William Stanley Business Park	The William Stanley Business Park is still under development. Great strides have been made to cleanup, mediate and prepare 26-acres of the site for redevelopment. There are a number of redevelopment barriers still facing the remaining 26-acres of the site.
Jones Block Redevelopment Project	The Jones Block Restoration is still underdevelopment, but progress has been made.
MASS MoCA Small Business Development Center	MASS MoCA is still in the process of developing a stand alone Small Business Development Center. They are presently leasing space for start-up businesses and artists at the MASS MoCA complex.
Pittsfield Enterprise Center	The Berkshire Enterprise Center was able to relocate to an expanded site. Their new site provides furnished interim office space for businesses looking for a supportive place to grow, focusing on supporting businesses, providing low cost space, high-speed internet connection, business consulting and shared services.
Berkshire Business Real Estate Locator	The Berkshire Business Real Estate Locator is up and running and accessible through the Berkshire Chamber of Commerce webpage.
New England Log Homes	The redevelopment of this site is progressing. In recent years the site has completed a feasibility study and preliminary plan for redevelopment of the site. The project recently secured a for \$375,000, to the Community Development Corporation of South Berkshire for the demolition of the buildings on the site.
Lane Property Redevelopment	Still researching.
Dalton Business Park	The Town of Dalton, through the Dalton Development and Industrial Commission, has targeted one of eight sites from the Dalton Business Development Plan to actively pursue the development of an Industrial Park.
Colonial Theater	In 2006, the Colonial Theatre reopened after twenty-two months of reconstruction. The Colonial is a great example of a project that used a public-private partnership to leveraged dollars to redevelop a cornerstone institution in the City of Pittsfield and the region at large.
Downtown Business Revolving Loan Fund	No progress has been made.

Labor Force & Network Initiatives	
Healthcare Pipeline (Workforce Initiative)	Still underdevelopment.
LPN Program (Workforce Initiative)	A nursing program was never established at MCLA. Berkshire Community College does, however, have nursing programs for Practical Nurse Certificates and Nursing A.S. and B.S. degrees.
Berkshire Applied Technology Council Applied Engineering Program (Workforce Initiative)	Still researching.
Berkshire Plastic Network (Network Initiative)	A regional network of plastic manufacturers has been established.
B.E.S.T. Building Essential Skills Through Training (Workforce Initiative)	Still researching.
P-21 Pathways to Success by 21	Still researching.
Career Academies - Work Based Learning Opportunities	Still researching.
Berkshire Works Marketing	Still researching.

2001 CEDS Project Priorities

Projects	Project Status
Redevelopment of the General Electric Site (Regional Priority)	The redevelopment of the former General Electric site in Pittsfield is making progress. Of the 200-acre site, 52-acres have been established at the William Stanley Business Park. Of which, 26-acres have been completed to "shovel ready." Another 26-acres is in the process of being reclaimed and prepared for redevelopment.
Redevelopment of the North Adams Gravel Pit Site (Site Project Priority #1)	The North Adams Gravel Pit site is ready for redevelopment. There have been a number of national retailers that have expressed interest in the site; however, no redevelopment has taken place to date.
North Adams Venture Center / Jones Block Restoration (Site Project Priority #2)	The North Adams Venture Center redevelopment plans changed. The site has now been redeveloped as studio artist-loft condo's. The Jones Block Restoration is still underdevelopment, but progress has been made.
Water/Sewer Expansion to Pittsfield Municipal Airport (Site Project Priority #3)	These services were extended to the airport, specifically to Bousquet on Dan Fox Drive. The services were not, however, extended to the location of the proposed Airport Industrial park.
Industrial Sites along Adams/North Adams Corridor on Route 8 (Feasibility Study)	A feasibility study was completed for this site. Both the City of North Adams and Town of Adams have taken steps to prepare this corridor for redevelopment.

Industrial Sites along the Route 102 Corridor in Lee (Feasibility Study)	The Laurel Mill site has been classified as a 43D site.
Industrial Sites Near the Pittsfield Municipal Airport (Feasibility Study)	A feasibility study for this site was never completed. A new project proposal was submitted during the solicitation for project for the 2011 Berkshire CEDS.
Vacant Truck Plaza in West Stockbridge (Feasibility Study)	A partial Feasibility Study was completed. The site remains to be vacant.
Lane Construction Site in Lee (Feasibility Study)	Still needs a Feasibility Study.
Plunkett Hospital in Adams (Feasibility Study)	Redeveloped
Tannery Site in North Adams (Feasibility Study)	
Regional Revolving Loan Fund (Financial Support)	No progress has been made.
Silicon Village Web Academy (Workforce Development)	No progress has been made.
Applied Technology Center of Excellence (Workforce Development)	Still Researching.
Community Cultural Center (Workforce Development)	Still Researching.
North Adams Technology Training Center (Workforce Development)	No progress has been made.

Draft

State Cooperation, Consistency and Integration

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts does not have an EDA approved State CEDS. To ensure this CEDS process incorporates the Commonwealth's current economic development plans and priorities and complies with EDA requirements, BRPC staff contacted the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED). According to Eric Nakajima, Senior Policy Advisor at EOHED, the Commonwealth is in the process of initiating a state-wide economic planning initiative. The actual timeline and structure for this process has yet to be determined. He did, however, suggest that reference should be made to the Commonwealth's *A Framework for Action: The State Regional Economic Development Strategy* (or Framework) plan, published in January 2009, since major concepts within the Framework are expected to be carried forward.

The Framework was developed by EOHED, in collaboration with the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute and the John Adams Innovation Institute of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative. The document was intended to facilitate a discussion of economic development with local, regional and civic stakeholders to focus efforts at the state and regional levels to ensure economic prosperity for the Commonwealth. The mission for this plan is:

"To develop a framework for state programs and investments in partnership with local and regional leaders that leads to sustained economic growth and shared prosperity throughout the Commonwealth."

While understanding that the Framework is the most recent economic development planning document available, at the state level, the CEDS Strategy Committee determined it important to recognize and evaluate this plan in contrast to the 2011 Berkshire CEDS process. To do so, the CEDS Strategy Committee compared *The Action Plan for Economic Prosperity*, specifically the goals, objectives and project priorities sections, to the Framework's three tasks and actions for implementation. The three tasks of the Framework are:

1. Identification of assets, initiatives and investments that lead to realistic near-term and long-term economic growth throughout the Commonwealth.
2. Communicate a straightforward framework for the Patrick Administration's economic development priorities.
3. Prioritize state investments and initiatives and promote meaningful collaboration with community, civic, business, municipal, and legislative leaders throughout the Commonwealth.

From this comparison, the CEDS Strategy Committee found that the 2011 Berkshire CEDS process incorporated the fundamental areas of focus for attention and investment outlined within the Framework to support regional economic prosperity: cluster development and innovation; workforce and family economic security; regional and statewide infrastructure; and vital communities. The foundational drivers to support the implementation of these areas of focus were consistent as well. A mechanism not mentioned within the Framework, but emphasized by the CEDS Strategy Committee, was the development of a comprehensive package of business development resources as an important mechanism to facilitate business growth and regional stability. Although the implementing actions within the two plans were different, primarily in scale, the underlying concentration of the Commonwealth's Framework aligned with the 2011 Berkshire CEDS process.

To ensure ongoing collaboration with the Commonwealth and their economic development initiatives and planning, the CEDS Strategy Committee it was suggested that a representative from EOHED participate in all future CEDS planning activities.