

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
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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, March 22nd, 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 (Tuesday, March 8th, 2011)
3. Public Comments (Non-Agenda Items)
4. 2011 CEDS – Berkshire CEDS Project Priority Lists ----- **Action Item**
5. 2011 CEDS – Implementation
6. 2011 CEDS – Performance Measures
7. Next Meeting (Tuesday, April 12th, 2011)
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.

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

Tuesday, March 8, 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 AB Mike Nuvalle AB Laury Epstein X Mike Supranowicz AB Lauri Klefos X
Michael Hoffmann X Christine Ludwizewski AB Eleanore Velez AB Deanna Ruffer AB
Ann Dobrowolski (Alt) X Helena Fruscio X Tim Geller X Robert Wilson AB Brenda Burdick AB
Mark Berman X

BRPC Staff

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

EDA Representative

Matthew Suchodolski X

Public

Andy McKeever X

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order

At 12:40pm it was determined that there were not enough Committee members present yet (quorum) to hold the March 8, 2011 meeting of the CEDS Strategy Committee.

2. Informational Presentation Matthew Suchodolski, EDA Economic Development Specialist (Tentative)

Since there were not enough Committee members present for a quorum, Mr. Matuszko asked whether Mr. Suchodolski, EDA Economic Development Specialist for Massachusetts, would be willing to give his presentation as an information talk to the Committee members that were present? Mr. Suchodolski agreed. To ensure compliance with Massachusetts Public Meeting laws, Mr. Matuszko explained to all individuals present that Mr. Suchodolski's presentation would be for informational purposes only. He further noted that without a quorum, no actions or motions could be made by the Committee at this time. With that said, Mr. Matuszko handed the floor to Mr. Suchodolski.

Mr. Suchodolski began the presentation by explaining that he is an employee of the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) and is the Economic Development Specialist from Massachusetts. He then noted that he was not present to help, but rather to help partner. He subsequently mentioned that the CEDS process is designed to be "regional;" so in no way, shape or form is he present to tell the Committee or the citizens of Berkshire County

what they should do with this CEDS. The Berkshire CEDS is the economic development plan for the region, not EDA's. The EDA's regulations and guidance provide a framework for entities, like BRPC, to work towards the development of a regional CEDS. A CEDS is an evolving process and document designed to help grow regional economies. Mr. Suchodolski identified that the most important takeaway, from the presentation, should be that CEDS's are regional documents not EDA documents. The CEDS should be focused on helping and growing the economic vitality of the region through job creation, retention and the charting of private investment. During the course of Mr. Suchodolski's presentation, he spoke to the following topics and concepts:

- **Brief history and background of EDA;**
- **Discussed what a CEDS is and how it is supposed to be used;**
 - Creating an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies
 - Integrates a region's human and physical capital planning in the service of economic development
 - Continuing economic development planning process developed with broad-based and diverse public and private sector participation. It must set forth the goals and objectives necessary to solve the economic development problems of the region
 - Benchmark by which a regional economy can evaluate opportunities with other regions in the national economy
- **EDA's role within Massachusetts;**
- **Project priority list requirements and methods for presenting project information within the CEDS report; and**
- **EDA funding/project eligibility.**

Following Mr. Suchodolski's presentation, there were a number of questions asked by individuals in attendance. Those questions included:

- **How does the EDA define "substantial population loss?"** *Mr. Suchodolski explained that the EDA considers the combination of two factors when examining the eligibility criteria: number of citizens lost and time span of loss.*
- **How does the EDA evaluate project applications?** *Mr. Suchodolski explained that project proposals are examined in-house, there is a two-tier evaluation process, and each project is given a ranked/scored against the eligibility criteria (Highly Competitive, Competitive or Not Competitive). He mentioned that it is his job to guide, partner and work with project proponents to make their application as competitive as possible. Under current funding constraints, Mr. Suchodolski explained that his regional office has received approximately \$28-33 million annually (last two-years). In FY'2011, for every \$6 of requests coming in the EDA was able to get \$1 onto projects. In an instance where project proposals meet all the criteria and are determined to be highly competitive, an administrative decision is made allocating funds to specific projects.*

Mr. Matuszko distributed an informational summary of how BRPC staff understood the EDA's funding criteria and eligibility requirements; however, he encouraged everyone present to visit the EDA's webpage for additional information or contact the EDA directly. Mr. Matuszko then thanked Mr. Suchodolski's for providing an informational presentation. He then checked to see whether there was now enough Committee members present to begin the meeting. Seeing eleven Committee members present, Mr. Matuszko called the meeting to order.

3. Call to Order

At 1:35pm on March 8, 2011 a meeting of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Strategy Committee was convened. Mr. Matuszko 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.

4. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Matuszko asked for approval of the meeting minutes from the February 15, 2011 meeting of the CEDS Strategy Committee.

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

5. Public Comments (Non-Agenda Items)

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

Project Priorities agenda item.

6. 2011 CEDS – Berkshire CEDS Project Priorities

Mr. Matuszko started by explaining that at the last meeting, staff had presented the CEDS Strategy Committee with a proposed method to prioritize the project proposals. Following that presentation, Committee members entered into an in-depth conversation focusing on the evaluation criteria and the ranking results. As a result of that discussion, Mr. Matuszko mentioned that staff was asked to solicit comments from project proponents regarding the initial project rankings and to gather additional information about their project, as it pertained to the six fundamental elements.

From that solicitation, Mr. Matuszko explained that a number of project proponents had decided to respond. Those responses were distributed to all Committee members last Friday for review and a copy of the responses has been made available as a handout at this meeting. He then briefly mentioned the proponents (City of Pittsfield, City of North Adams, Berkshire Creative and Berkshire Chamber of Commerce) and projects for which comments were submitted that requested changes to the project listing. He also noted comments received for a couple of projects that generally supported their project listing.

Mr. Matuszko then explained to Committee members that the focus of this meeting was to establish a method for listing and prioritized projects. Before discussing staff's proposed method for listing and prioritizing projects, Mr. Matuszko inquired as to whether any Committee members had comments pertaining to where the discussion left off at the last meeting or more importantly how to proceed with the listing of projects? From the information presented by Mr. Suchodolski, Mr. Matuszko was struck by the great deal of leeway EDA allows for the listing of projects within the CEDS report. A Committee member then mentioned that it seems as though the EDA gives more emphasis to the "projects" listed in the CEDS report, as opposed to how the projects are listed. Mr. Matuszko followed the commented with a clarification of the benefits to completing a CEDS, which included: the development of an economic blueprint for the region and a mechanism to allow organizations and project proponents to access EDA funds. Mr. Matuszko then mentioned an unintended consequence that staff had realized regarding the impacts of project listing on the ability to pursue funding from other sources. Another Committee member mentioned that they were taken back by the quality and quantity of information submitted within project applications. Due to this lack of information the evaluations/scoring process was very difficult. It was suggested, by a Committee member that maybe projects should simple be listed alphabetically, as opposed to prioritizing them. Mr. Matuszko deferred to Mr. Suchodolski for direction. Mr. Suchodolski referenced the guidance that had been shown during his presentation, which highlighted the fact that the listing of projects must be prioritized in one way, shape or form. Mr. Matuszko clarified that an alphabetized list of projects would not work.

A Committee member then suggested that an examination of the median scores may result in the identification of gaps or natural breaks. From these breaks, there is the possibility that projects could be divided and grouped to a greater detail. Mr. Matuszko explained that that was similar to staff's initial concept of breaking the projects up into high, medium and low groupings based on the median scores. The Committee member concurred with staff's statement, however, explained further that the projects could be divided into smaller groups. Other Committee members agreed, however, there were suggestions that the more detailed groupings of projects should be aggregated by sub-region, community or category. From this discussion, Committee members asked for staff's recommendation.

Mr. Matuszko explained that staff's grouping or categorizing of projects was a combination of three methods. The proposed methods took into consideration the initial scoring results of the CEDS Strategy Committee and the additional comments submitted by project proponents, as well as staff's general knowledge of project proposals and their interconnections with one another. The three methods proposed by staff included:

1. **Listing project proposals that were identified as "Game Changers" or "Regionally Significant Projects list" individually or by way of grouping proposals together.** (*It was noted, by staff, these projects or groupings of projects were seen as impacting the entire county.*)
2. **Listing the remaining projects by category** (*i.e. Education and Workforce Development, Physical Projects, Physical and Technology Infrastructure, and Programs and Initiatives*).
3. **Listing of projects within the "Physical Projects" category by sub-region.** (*The sub-regions would include North, Central and south.*)

Knowing that the "Physical Projects" category list produced much discussion at the last meeting, Mr. Matuszko spoke to the methodology behind listing projects that have direct impacts to communities in specific areas (sub-regions). Projects in the northern portion of the county don't have direct impacts to the County's central or southern communities. Mr. Karns also noted that this was the methodology used in the economic planning document of the 1990's, the precursor to the 2001 CEDS. This categorization recognizes that there are sub-regions within the

county, predominantly due to geography. A handout, explaining staff's proposed listing method, was distributed at this point in the meeting. To ensure Committee members better understood the concepts proposed by staff, Mr. Matuszko urged Committee members not to jump ahead in the handout. Page 1 of the handout, provided a listing of the projects that have the greatest potential for regional impacts. Mr. Matuszko went project by project discussing the projects or groups of projects list on the page. He also explained that many of these projects were prerequisites or directly affected economic development activities or projects throughout the county. Mr. Karns noted that many of the regional projects were identified in the *Regional Evaluation* section as weaknesses or threats in the region. Staff noted that many of the projects listed in this category received high scores during the evaluation.

Comments raised regarding staff's proposed listing methods included:

- **Why were all the projects grouped under the Regional Highway Access Improvements proposal, which ranked low were ranked low and still made it to the list?** *Mr. Matuszko explained that all the projects in this group were identified as prerequisites to other regional developments and are listed in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP); therefore, staff recommended they should be identified as region-wide projects.*
- **Another comment pertained to the grouping of projects and why more projects were not grouped initially (i.e. Hubbard Avenue with the Ashuelot Park and Schnopps-Roberts sites)?** *Mr. Matuszko explained that the grouping of proposals in the regional projects was intended to do just that, group projects. In the instance of Hubbard Avenue, staff determined it was a project that impacted the central portion of the county rather than the whole county. He also mentioned that other projects could be grouped together.*

Hearing the Committee's comments, Mr. Matuszko then began to discuss in greater detail the second listing method, categories. Before moving the discussion forward, he mentioned that the first method of listing projects was intended to identify a relatively short list of projects, all of which had a true regional impact. To clarify the information presented by staff, a Committee member asked whether every project regardless of ranking was going to be listed in the report. Staff explained that a listing of all the projects would be provided in an appendix. Only projects that ranked as "high," "medium" or that were authorized to be listed by the Committee would be discussed in greater detail in the report. These projects would also represent the Project Priorities List.

To ensure that staff was headed in the right direction with the proposed listing methods; Mr. Matuszko asked whether Committee members were generally supportive of the method? Committee members concurred.

At this point in the meeting the digital recorder stopped working. Therefore, there are no recorded records of the meeting minutes beyond this point. Information and discussions presented below are from the memories and hand written records of BRPC staff.

The CEDS Strategy Committee concurred with staff's suggested methods for listing project priorities; however, there were specific projects that Committee members wanted to discuss. Mr. Matuszko asked the Committee whether they had interest in going through the Regionally Significant projects one-by-one and then projects with a "Low" ranking. Committee members approved of this structure for finalizing the project priority list. In instances where there were concerns surrounding the listing or location of a project proposal a motion was requested by staff to establish the placement of the project proposal. With that said, Mr. Matuszko began to discussing the project proposals.

Discussion and motions are listed below by project or project group:

- **Regional Telecommunications Network:** *There were no concerns regarding this project proposal.*
- **Pittsfield Municipal Airport:** *A Committee member asked staff to provide an explanation of the regional economic impacts stemming from the airport improvements. Mr. Karns explained that the airports cliental primarily consisted of corporate jets and regional connector flights. He then mentioned that many of the region's businesses and companies utilize the airport to transport clients and employees. Without the improvements, people would either have to travel to Albany, NY or Hartford, CT. Although there is another airport located in North Adams, this airport lacks similar safety upgrades to handle larger corporate jets. Mr. Matuszko asked the Committee for a motion.*

Ms. LaRoche made a motion recommending that the Pittsfield Municipal Airport Improvement project be kept as a Regionally Significant Project. This motion was seconded by Ms. Fruscio. Mr. Matuszko then

asked for unanimous consent, Ms. Epstein opposed to the motion. Seeing no other objections the motion passed.

- **Regional Highway Access Improvements:** *While the Committee had no problems with including a project grouping of regional highway improvements, there were concerns surrounding the inclusion of “low” ranked projects. The Committee asked staff to explain how the project grouping was determined and why “low” ranking projects had been included on this list. Based on input received during the project comment period, staff explained that there were a number of project proposals that had been identified to have regional implications. Mr. Matuszko explained that without completing the list of regional highway improvements economic growth specifically that of manufacturing and warehousing would be inhibited. While many of the projects listed in this group were ranked as a “low” priority, many of them were prerequisites for other projects to be implemented.*

Ms. Klefos made a motion to add a project proposal that just spoke to regional improvements.

Following this motion, Committee members discussed whether to include a list of project proposals within the broader proposal for Regional Highway Access Improvements. Staff provided Committee members with a more detailed explanation of the regional impacts for each of the projects listed under the broader project grouping. Mr. Matuszko asked Ms. Klefos whether she wished to modify her motion.

Based on the Committee’s discussion, Ms. Klefos decided to withdraw her motion.

Mr. Bolton made a subsequent motion that recommended the project grouping entitled “Regional Highway Access Improvements” be kept and that the projects listed under this grouping be limited to this regional highway improvement projects listed in the Regional Transportation Plan. The motion was seconded by Ms. Fruscio. Mr. Matuszko then asked for unanimous consent, seeing no objections the motion passed.

- **Berkshire Creative Initiative:** *While most of the projects listed under the “Berkshire Creative Initiative” grouping were ranked either high or medium, Committee members questioned the inclusion of the “Creative Education Initiative” and “Berkshire Festival” projects in the listing. Mr. Matuszko explained that while all the Berkshire Creative project proposals were ranked individually, they had been submitted as a bundle. Staff decided to separate the proposals because each project had been submitted with its own solicitation form and could be implemented independently of other projects. A number of Committee members began discussing whether the projects belonged as a regional project grouping. As the project proponents for these projects, Ms. Fruscio explained that all of the projects proposed are envisioned to be regional in nature and not focused on one community or sub-region.*

Mr. Hoffmann made a motion to move the Berkshire Creative Initiatives project grouping out of the Regionally Significant Project listing to the appropriate project category listing and to keep the two “low” ranked projects in the listing. This motion was seconded by Ms. Klefos. Mr. Matuszko then asked for unanimous consent, seeing no objections the motion passed.

- **Alternative Energy and Energy Infrastructure Improvements:** *There were no concerns regarding this project proposal.*

With the review of the Regionally Significant Projects listing complete, Mr. Matuszko asked the Committee whether there were any projects missing from this list. A number of Committee members suggested that the Passenger Rail project proposal be added to the list regionally significant list. Mr. Matuszko asked if there was additional discussion on the suggestion or whether there was a motion for the recommendation.

Ms. Klefos made a motion to include a Regional Passenger Rail project grouping, including the Passenger Rail CT to Pittsfield and East to West Passenger Rail Enhancements projects, to the Regional Significant Project listing. The motion was seconded by Mr. Geller. Mr. Matuszko then asked for unanimous consent, Mr. Bolton objected the motion. Seeing no other objections the motion passed.

Mr. Matuszko asked whether there was any further discussion on this list or if other projects needed to be added to the regionally significant list? Seeing none, Mr. Matuszko then transitioned the discussion to the “low” ranked projects. A Committee member suggested that the “Hubbard Avenue Improvements” proposal be move up into a category listing. During discussion on this suggestion, a Committee member recommended that a project grouping be created including the Hubbard Avenue Improvements, Ashuelot Park Development and the Schnopps-Roberts Site projects. Mr. Matuszko asked for a motion.

Ms. LaRoche made a motion to create a project grouping of the Hubbard Avenue Improvements, Ashuelot Park Development and the Schnopps-Roberts Site projects, and to move this grouping to the Physical Development category under the Central Sub-Region. This motion was seconded by Mr. Hoffmann. Mr. Matuszko asked for unanimous consent, seeing no objections the motion passed.

Mr. Matuszko then asked whether there were any other projects that the Committee wished to have moved up into a category listing. Seeing none, Mr. Matuszko acknowledged that the meeting was over its allotted time and suggested that discussion on the Implementation agenda item be continued to the next meeting. Committee members agreed.

7. 2011 CEDS – Implementation

Due to a lack of time this item was not discussed at this meeting.

8. Next Meeting (Tuesday, March 22th, 2011 at 12:30pm)

The Committee agreed to hold the next CEDS Strategy Committee meeting on Tuesday, March 22, 2011 at 12:30pm.

7. Other Items?

No items were raised.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10pm.

Documents distributed at the meeting included:

- Meeting Agenda
- Draft Minutes from the February 15, 2011 CEDS Strategy Committee meeting
- A Project Comments Packet, containing responses that were submitted by project proponents during the project comment period.
- A handout containing staff's proposed methods of listing priority projects.
- A handout containing staff's understanding of the EDA's funding criteria and eligibility requirements.

Projects Representing the Greatest Needs Regionally

Project List

(This list is proposed to be included in the CEDS report.)

Regional Telecommunications Network (*Regional Broadband Upgrades "Middle-Mile" and WiredWest Community Fiber Network "Last-Mile"*)

Pittsfield Municipal Airport Safety Improvements

Regional Highway Access Improvements (*South Street (Rte. 7/20) Improvements, Route 8/Friend street Intersection Improvements, BMC Area/North Street Improvements, Route 7/20 Corridor Access Management Improvements, East Street Reconstruction, First Street Improvements, Route 20 Traffic Improvements (Lee/Lenox) or Pursuit of new I-90 Interchange, Westside Connector, Route 8 Alternating Passing Lane (Cheshire/Lanesborough)*)

Alternative Energy and Energy Infrastructure Improvements

Regional Passenger Rail Improvements (*East to West Passenger Rail Enhancements and Passenger Rail from CT to Pittsfield*)

**Projects that Enhance the Region
Physical Development Category (by sub-region)**

Project List

(This list is proposed to be included in the CEDS report.)

North Sub-Region

Development of the Greylock Glen Outdoor Recreation & Environmental Education Center

Former Commonwealth Sprague Site (Brown Street)

Route 8 Corridor Redevelopment (*North Adams*)(*Gravel Bank, North Adams Plaza Old Route 8 Corridor*)

Central Sub-Region

Life Science Center @ William Stanley Business Park

William Stanley Business Park

Crane Stationary Mill Redevelopment

Hubbard Avenue Development Area (*Ashuelot Park Development, Hubbard Avenue Improvements and Schopps-Robert Site*)

Sports Complex

Berkshire Mall/Civic Center/Hotel

South Sub-Region

New England Log Homes Site

River School Redevelopment

Redevelopment of GB Fairgrounds

Monument Mills Area Reuse Planning

Redevelopment of Historic GB Firehouse

Housatonic School Redevelopment

**Projects that Enhance the Region
Physical and Technology Infrastructure Category**

Project List

(This list is proposed to be included in the CEDS report.)

West Street Water Line Upgrade

DownStreet Art Project

Projects that Enhance the Region Programs and Initiatives Category

Project List

(This list is proposed to be included in the CEDS report.)

Adaptive Reuse of Mills

City of Pittsfield Municipal Airport Industrial Park Feasibility Study

Regionalization of the City of Pittsfield's Municipal Airport

Berkshire Creative Initiative (*Berkshire Product Initiative, Seed Fund Network, Creative Lives Here, Berkshire Creative Challenge and Berkshire Festival*)

Berkshire Farm-to-School Feasibility Study

Regional Economic Development District

Housatonic RR Station

Downtown Parking Strategy

**Projects that Enhance the Region
Education and Workforce Development Category**

Project List

(This list is proposed to be included in the CEDS report.)

Berkshire Hills Internship Program

Berkshire Creative Initiative (*Creative Industry Workforce Pathways and Creative Education Initiative*)

Other Project Proposals Considered

Project List

(Considered projects are proposed to be included in the CEDS report in an appendix.)

Physical and Technology Infrastructure Projects

Route 102 infrastructure

Public Transit

Lenox Sewer Project

Harriman & West Airport

Washington Mountain Road

Phase 3 - Lenox Village Improvements

Lee Bike Path

Bridge Projects

Program Initiative Projects

Berkshire Tourism Website Restructuring

Berkshire Welcome Center Feasibility Study

Berkshire County Foodshed Analysis and Feasibility Study

Berkshire Tourism Research

Regionalization of the City of Pittsfield Wastewater Treatment Facility

Downtown West Side Plan

Master Plan for Washington

Pre-Treatment Policy Development

Columbia Mill Dam

Economic Gardening

October Mountain - Woods Pond Gateway

Physical Development Projects

Mohawk Theater Restoration

Lee Mills Project

St. James Church

Sawmill Bank Project

McKay Street, Downtown Streetscape & Parking Garage Restoration

Armory Bldg. Re-use

Route 2 Corridor

Redevelopment of the former City Sewer Treatment Plant

Data or Network Operations Center in the City of Pittsfield

Implementation of the Berkshire CEDS

The success of the 2011 Berkshire CEDS is rooted in the implementation of the refreshed Vision Statement, Goals and Objectives, and Project Priorities Lists which were established by the CEDS Strategy Committee during multiple meetings from January through March 2011. Based on these components, that *The Action Plan for Economic Prosperity* is comprised of, the CEDS Strategy Committee formulated a list of regional activities and project based actions that will accomplish the goals and objectives of this CEDS report. From their implementation, these measures will provide the communities, economic development entities and organizations, and citizens in the region a 5-year roadmap for the diversification, stabilization and transformation of the region's economy. Their implementation will also create a vehicle in which the region can better responding to priority issues, barriers to economic development, proactively address the region's evolving economy and to maintain the momentum of the CEDS process in the region.

The regional activities and project based actions, provided in the following pages, are listed by goal together with implementation information. Activity or project sponsors are identified with two asterisks (**) after the organizations title.

DRAFT

GOAL 1: TO IMPLEMENT UNIFIED REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES.

Regional Activities

Activity Name	Description	Activity Sponsor (**) and Partners	Status	Funding Sources	Next Steps	Target Completion
Regional Economic Action Team (REAT)	Develop a unified entity of regional economic development focused organizations to facilitate economic planning in Berkshire County.		Underway	Unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish Board - Pursue funding for operations - Hold quarterly meetings 	December 2011
CEDS Status Reports and 5-year Update	Continue the discussion of economic planning within the region through the completion of Status Reports annually and a 5-year update.		Concept	EDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apply for EDA Planning Grant - Maintain participation of the CEDS Strategy Committee - Review CEDS report - Work with project proponents 	Ongoing

Project Based Actions

Project Name	Description	Project Sponsor (**) and Partners	Status	Funding Sources	Next Steps	Target Completion
Regional Economic Development District	Take the necessary steps to establish an Economic Development District over all of Berkshire County.		Concept	EDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apply for EDA planning grant - Complete the necessary EDA requirements for an EDD 	December 2013

GOAL 2: TO ADVANCE THE REGION'S ECONOMIC PROGRESS THROUGH THE USE OF CURRENT AND PERTINENT DATA.

Regional Activities

Activity Name	Description	Activity Sponsor (**) and Partners	Status	Funding Sources	Next Steps	Target Completion
Berkshire Benchmarks	Berkshire Benchmarks is a regional initiative to improve the quality, access, and volume of data and analysis on the region through an examination of regional indicators and a data clearinghouse.		Active	Organization Funds	- Expand Data Mining and Data Sets - Evaluate Industry Cluster Data - Utilize Data for CEDS Annual Status Report	Ongoing
Annual Workforce Blueprint	This activity will examine the critical and emerging industries through the region and identify the necessary skill sets for those sectors.		Active	EOLED Grants and Commonwealth	- Complete bi-annual report (May, 2011) - Distribute results to regional partners	Bi-annual (<i>Ongoing</i>)
Census Data	Fully utilize the 2010 Census and subsequent ACS estimates data.		Active	Organization Funded	- Analyze - Utilize data for Annual Status reports	Ongoing
GIS Mapping	Use the thematic mapping of information to broaden the understanding of regional economic issues.		Concept	Organization Funded	- Enhance regional mapping of census data	December 2011

Project Based Actions

Project Name	Description	Project Sponsor (**) and Partners	Status	Funding Sources	Next Steps	Target Completion

GOAL 3: TO INCREASE THE ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS OF THE REGION IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY.

Regional Activities

Activity Name	Description	Activity Sponsor (**) and Partners	Status	Funding Sources	Next Steps	Target Completion
Business Development Assistance	Develop a “One-Stop” shop for business development and start-up needs.		Active	Organization Funding Support	- Expand awareness and service capacity - Develop virtual clearinghouse for support programs and organizations	2011
Site and Building Locator	The Site and Building Locator is a web based program that posts potential development locations.		Active	Organization Funding Support	- Expand visibility of Locator - Expand Locator database	2012
Regional Marketing Program	A regional program to market Berkshire County to consumers within and outside the county.		Active <i>(Separate Initiatives)</i>	[??]	- Develop and enhance a Berkshires Brand - Coordinate Unified Marketing Campaign	Ongoing
Regional Retention/Attraction Program	A regional program to diversify Berkshire County’s economic base through the recruitment and retention of businesses.		Active <i>(Separate Initiatives)</i>	[??]	- Establish a sub-committee of REAT to oversee this program - Meet with regional businesses to determine future needs - Research and actively recruit new companies	Ongoing
Angel Fund Network	The Angel Fund Network is a mechanism to connect investors or fund managers with emerging or expanding business prospects.		Active <i>(Separate Initiatives)</i>	[??]	- Identify investors and prospects - Hold networking events	[??]

EDA Loan Fund Program	Develop an EDA Loan Fund program (micro lending for small businesses) for Berkshire County.		Concept	EDA and Commonwealth	- Apply for EDA Loan Fund grant.	2013
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Project Based Actions

Project Name	Description	Project Sponsor (**) and Partners	Status	Funding Sources	Next Steps	Target Completion
Berkshire Creative Initiative	The Berkshire Creative Initiative is a multifaceted program to strengthen creative economy business. The most pertinent aspects to increase competitiveness are the Creative lives Here, Creative Challenge, Product Initiative, and the Seed Fund Network.		Active and Concept	EDA and Commonwealth	- Apply for EDA grant to offset costs of the initiative	[?]

GOAL 4: TO STABILIZE AND STRENGTHEN OF THE REGION’S WORKFORCE.

Regional Activities

Activity Name	Description	Activity Sponsor (**) and Partners	Status	Funding Sources	Next Steps	Target Completion
Worker Training Fund (WTF)	This activity promotes regional industries to apply for WTF grants to implement training programs.		Active	Workforce Training Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand awareness and marketing of WTF - Provide technical assistance to industries - Facilitate and encourage industry applications 	O
Connecting Activities Internship Program	This program provides a mechanism to connect high school students with industry internships and training programs in order to successfully compete in post-secondary education programs.		Active	Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a broader network of educators and industries for internships - Secure grant funds to expand program, specifically recruit private investors 	Ongoing
	This program also connects post-secondary students with industry training programs to develop the necessary career-related skills in order to successfully compete in the workplace		Active <i>(Separate Initiatives)</i>	Industries and Educational Institutions		
STEM Pipeline Network	The STEM Pipeline Network is a Berkshire Region and Commonwealth initiative to improve STEM educational programs, while strengthening connections between businesses and education to inspire and lead our next generation of educators.		Active	Commonwealth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete construction of the MCLA Center for Science and Innovation - Increase enrollment - Actively recruit qualified STEM teachers - Improve the STEM educational offerings available in public and private schools 	2013

Healthcare Pipeline	Through the Healthcare Pipeline an effort is being made to reduce nursing and allied health staffing shortages regionally and outwardly.		Active	Federal and Commonwealth Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attract, train and retain healthcare employees - Implement CAN, LPN, RN training programs - Research/apply for industry sector grants 	Ongoing
Sector Initiative	This activity promotes the development of strategies to address critical workforce need in the region.		Active	Commonwealth Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement Photovoltaic training program - Identify other industry sector priorities 	Ongoing
Berkshire Compact	Utilize the Berkshire Compact and the region's education partnerships to prepare and strengthen the next generation of workers.		Active	Organization Funding Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide financial assistance for students who reach the milestones of the Berkshire Passport - Continue to organize and work with industry clusters to identify workforce needs - Strengthen partnerships between educators and employers to develop training programs that meet regional employment needs 	Ongoing

Project Based Actions

Project Name	Description	Project Sponsor (**) and Partners	Status	Funding Sources	Next Steps	Target Completion
Berkshire Hills Internship Program	The Berkshire Hills Internship Program (B-HIP) is an intensive arts management internship program that combines hands-on work experience with classes taught by arts administration faculty, TalkBacks with the area's leading arts professionals, and the chance to fully participate in cultural events throughout Berkshire County.		Active	Organization Funding Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a broader network of educators and industries for internships - Seek additional funding pools to expand program 	Ongoing
Berkshire Creative Initiative	Through the Creative Industry Workforce Pathways and Creative Education Initiative components of the Berkshire Creative Initiative project group, efforts will be made to develop partnerships between artists, educators and creative economy companies to fill industry needs for well-skilled workers.		Concept	Grants and Organization Funding Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research employment needs for industries in the creative economy and the present state of arts and creativity in educational institutions throughout Berkshire County - Host meetings and open discussions with regional educators, cultural leaders and industries to assess the interest and capacity of developing programming specific to this sector 	2013

GOAL 5: TO ADVANCE HIGH-QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENTS TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT, REDEVELOPMENT AND REVITALIZATION OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT.

Regional Activities

Activity Name	Description	Activity Sponsor (**) and Partners	Status	Funding Sources	Next Steps	Target Completion
Regional Affordable Housing Initiative	Throughout Berkshire County there are multiple organizations working to provide affordable housing. This initiative is meant to promote and support all these efforts to ensure the availability of a broad-base of affordable housing options for all of Berkshire County residents.		Active	Organization Funding Support and Private Donors	- Strengthen communication between employers to ensure the availability and quantity of housing needs are met - Write letters of support for various entities to shore-up funding gaps	Ongoing
Land Use Reform	This regional initiative will promote the proactive updating of municipal bylaws to minimize permitting delays and adverse development impacts.		Active	DLTA, Community Allocated Funds and BRPC	- Proactively work with the region's communities to revise municipal bylaws (energy facilities, telecommunications, storm water regulations, etc.)	Ongoing
Regional Sustainability Plan	The Regional Sustainability Plan is a collaborative and comprehensive regional planning effort to develop a roadmap for county's future.		Underway	HUD	- Commence the development of the plan	February 2014

Project Based Actions

Project Name	Description	Project Sponsor (**) and Partners	Status	Funding Sources	Next Steps	Target Completion
Regional Tele-communications Network	Facilitate the installation of “Middle-Mille” and “Last-Mile” broadband infrastructure in Berkshire County.		Active	Communities, MBI Grant and Private Investment or Loans	- Develop and generate a broad-base of community support - Develop and execute organizational structure - Secure funding to implement	Ongoing
Pittsfield Municipal Airport Safety Improvements	This project is a combination of enhanced runway safety areas and runway extensions which will result in an infrastructure that is better equipped to serve the businesses and private aircraft that use the airport.		Active	FAA Airport Improvement Program (Federal, Commonwealth and Local Funds)	- [??]	2015
Regional Highway Access Improvement	This project is intended to support the development or installation of regional highway improvements, listed in the Regional Transportation Plan, as they support economic development.		Active	Federal and Commonwealth Transportation Funds	- Leverage local and state support for infrastructure improvements	Ongoing
Alternative Energy and Energy Infrastructure Improvements	This project will facilitate and support the installation of alternative energy generation facilities, encourage conservation (through energy audits and upgrades), and examine the regional energy distribution network to identify potential system upgrades.		Active <i>(Separate Initiatives)</i>	Federal and Commonwealth Transportation Funds, and Private Investments	- Work with communities to update zoning bylaws - Develop a toolbox for communities and developers considering the installation of alternative energy infrastructure - Develop a regional energy plan - Work with regional	Ongoing

					energy providers to develop energy summit	
Regional Passenger Rail Improvements	This project grouping, the East to West and the Pittsfield to Connecticut passenger rail projects, looks to promote public and private investment and upgrades to the region's rail network to facilitate expanded passenger rail service.		Active <i>(Separate Initiatives)</i>	Federal and Commonwealth Transportation Funds, and Private Investments	- Complete feasibility study of the Pittsfield to Connecticut Passenger Rail project - Meet with MassDOT to discuss upgrades to the East to West passenger rail corridor (CSX line)	2013

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GOAL 6: TO FACILITATE THE REGION’S ASSESSMENT, REMEDIATION AND REDEVELOPMENT OF BUILDINGS AND SITES.

Regional Activities

Activity Name	Description	Activity Sponsor (**) and Partners	Status	Funding Sources	Next Steps	Target Completion
Berkshire Brownfields Program	This is a regional program geared towards the investment of capital and resources to identify, assess and remediate sites containing contaminants from past development.		Active	Federal, Commonwealth and Local Funds	- Expand awareness and visibility of program - Facilitate the release of funds from the revolving loan fund to facilitate the utilization of underutilized sites and buildings - Continue to work with communities and property owners to identify, assess and remediate contaminated sites	Ongoing
Regional Assistance Program	This program will facilitate the redevelopment and reuse of underutilized mills and other buildings and sites.		Active	Organization Funding Support	- Continue and strength the relationships between community partners	Ongoing

Project Based Actions

Project Name	Description	Project Sponsor (**) and Partners	Status	Funding Sources	Next Steps	Target Completion

Performance Measures

To move the Berkshires economy forward and to facilitate the ongoing economic planning process the Berkshire CEDS has been completely rewritten for 2011, including the performance measures. The CEDS is required to be re-written every five-years; however, status reports are produced annually. The status reports helps to verify the implementation of the CEDS, assess its overall effectiveness and provides a mechanism for periodic updates where needed – in essence a vehicle for proactively addressing the region’s changing economy – to make the CEDS an evolving (or living) document.

As part of the status reports, developed by BRPC, the CEDS Strategy Committee will examine the implementation progress of the 2011 Berkshire CEDS report. Performance measures will be used to ascertain the effectiveness of *The Action Plan for Economic Prosperity* chapter, specifically the progress towards achieving the region’s goals, objectives and priority projects. To support this examination, current characteristic data from federal, state and other sources will be utilized to assist the assessment where appropriate. The CEDS Strategy Committee, through this process, will also be able to indentify supplemental steps that are needed to address both local and regional economic changes and challenges.

The performance measures to be used include:

1. **How many jobs have been created and retained after implementation of projects from the Berkshire Project Priority List?**
2. **What number and types of investments have been undertaken in the region?**
3. **What is the number of new business startups since the implementation of the CEDS? What industry sectors are those businesses in?**
4. **How has the economic environment of the region changed?**
5. **What is the status of the region’s characteristic data trends?**
6. **What collaborative or partnership efforts have been initiated? What are the statuses of those initiatives?**
7. **What characteristic trend changes have occurred with the region?**
8. **[Are there other measures to consider?]**

The CEDS areas of focus, drawn from the regional goals and objectives, include: spurring cluster development and innovation; workforce and family economic security; enhancement of local and regional infrastructure; and support for vital communities.