



Congressman JOHN W. OLVER

Berkshire County Transportation Update



MASSACHUSETTS



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear First District Resident,

As a member of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee in the U.S. House of Representatives, I am always fighting to secure federal funding for local highways, roads, bridges, transit services, intermodal links, bicycle paths, passenger rail service and airports. This newsletter is an update on some of those projects.

I've used my position on the Transportation Subcommittee to ensure that western and central Massachusetts communities receive their fair share of transportation dollars because I believe that a reliable, modern transportation infrastructure is critical to economic vitality.

I hope you find this update informative and useful.

Sincerely,

John W. Olver
Member of Congress

New Transportation Center Will Serve Entire County

“On schedule and on budget” is the message from the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA) regarding construction of a \$10 million intermodal transportation center in downtown Pittsfield. Federal funding I secured for this project will help ensure that downtown Pittsfield remains a focal point of economic activity. By linking rail, intercity commercial buses, BRTA transit buses, and taxicabs under



one roof, the new facility will be a vital transportation resource for our entire region.

The final design for the transportation center provides

for retail space on the first floor and administrative offices on the second floor. Plans for the first floor also include a Community Policing Center. Project managers expect to break ground by the end of July and hope to have the new center open to the public in summer 2003.

Berkshire Bike Paths Are Moving Forward

With federal and state funding, "Phase I" of the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail was constructed from Route 7 near the Berkshire Mall in Lanesboro to Cheshire (along Cheshire Lake). Our region's quality of life and tourism industry have already benefited from the creation of this trail. "Phase II" is currently under construction and will bring the trail into downtown Adams.



I talked with young cyclists about congressional support for environmental and recreational initiatives at the opening of the Ashuwillticook Trail.

Communities throughout Berkshire County are working with the Berkshire Bike Path Coalition to design a continuous network running from the Connecticut border all the way to Vermont. While many significant challenges to a county-wide trail remain, I am committed to making this idea a reality. A county-wide trail would link parks and recreation areas, schools and neighborhoods, as well as historic sites and cultural centers. Furthermore, it would make it feasible for more Berkshire residents to bike to work, thereby reducing our dependence on cars.

Center Street Project Nears Completion

The Center Street reconstruction project in Pittsfield is almost complete. The revitalization and reconstruction of Center Street will have a positive impact on North Street by alleviating congestion. It will also serve the entire county by providing direct access to the new transportation center and a more efficient route to travel north or south through the center of Pittsfield.

Spring Street Spruces Up

The retail district on Spring Street in Williamstown has undergone a facelift. Federal funds I secured were used to increase Spring Street's vehicle capacity, enhance the roadway with new curbing and sidewalks, and improve pedestrian safety. Spring Street is now even more attractive to businesses, residents, and visitors and is an ideal place to enjoy a relaxing afternoon in the Berkshire Hills.

The Vital Role of Public Transit

Improving public transportation has always been one of my top legislative priorities. Accessible transit is critical for people to get to work, for seniors to get to health care providers, and for students to get to school. In addition to enhancing personal mobility, quality public transportation cuts down on carbon dioxide emissions, the primary cause of global warming.

Over the last two years, I have secured federal funding for the BRTA to purchase new buses to serve our region. A new initiative spearheaded by the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) is now working to close public transit service gaps in northern Berkshire County, and I am committed to further improving transit services throughout the entire county.



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