

December 2022



# **CONTENT STRATEGY PROPOSAL**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) is a regional government office in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. The organization provides comprehensive planning services to municipalities which include land use, transportation, economic development, environmental management, sustainable communities, and public health. BRPC is the official region-wide planning agency in Berkshire County.

BRPC was organized in 1966 by the votes of ten cities and towns in Berkshire County. On May 9, 1966, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts approved the ten-member region and designated its area of jurisdiction as being the 32 municipalities that comprise Berkshire County. Since then, all 32 municipalities have voted to join the Commission as members.

Since launching its website, the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission has released a Request For Proposal (RFP) for a revamp of the site. An RFP is essentially a business document that introduces a new project and then requests action from qualified contractors to complete it. In the BRPC's RFP, they stress the importance of branding, the site map & navigation, the overall theme of the site, and other things to highlight in this redevelopment.

As content professionals, we will ensure to hit every target and go beyond expectations in order to create a solid website and online presence for the BRPC that can be used well into the foreseeable future. This content strategy will cover these bases and go into detail about what the website currently has to offer, what can be changed, and what new aspects can be implemented.

# INTRODUCTION

This report is proposing a content strategy, which is the planning, development, and management of content for a given platform or media source. In this case, it is the content strategy for a website as well as social media. Content strategy is instrumental in the web-building process and is extremely important for a site redesign project. It allows you to establish the content you already have and build from it, creating a stronger site with content created by qualified people that will resonate with visitors.

A content strategy proposal is a way to establish a clear game plan and ensure that everyone involved is on the same page. Transparency is vital in any part of the business world, so it's no different for a website revamp that will help enhance an organization's image and credibility.

BRPC's target audience consists of diverse people, organizations, and interests, both within and outside of Berkshire County, who can institute a change in the region. They highlight the significance of balancing competing public interests. Anyone interested in the Berkshire area and/or making a difference for the good of a community is an ideal audience for the organization.

The proposal begins with an assessment of the website's current state. Content alignment summary and SEO analysis are conducted as well as a review of the content, accessibility, writing, and architecture of the website. Additionally, competitors' websites are evaluated to determine factors that should be either avoided or taken into consideration for the BRPC site. Once these current factors are established, it dives into how the content can be facelifted and redesigned. This includes writing style guides to enhance the writing of the website, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that will shape website success, and the next steps that should be taken to complete the content lifecycle.

This content strategy proposal aligns well with the different guidelines of the RFP. It also lays out the framework for how we can meet the needs of the website so that it can be as informative, credible, and accessible as possible for patrons.

# CONTENT ALIGNMENT SUMMARY

The content alignment summary, also known as the Strategic Alignment Summary, is a very important component in the content strategy playing field and it serves many purposes to meet different business objectives. It helps emphasize the transparency you are trying to establish by getting project stakeholders aligned on the purpose of your project and what you hope to accomplish.

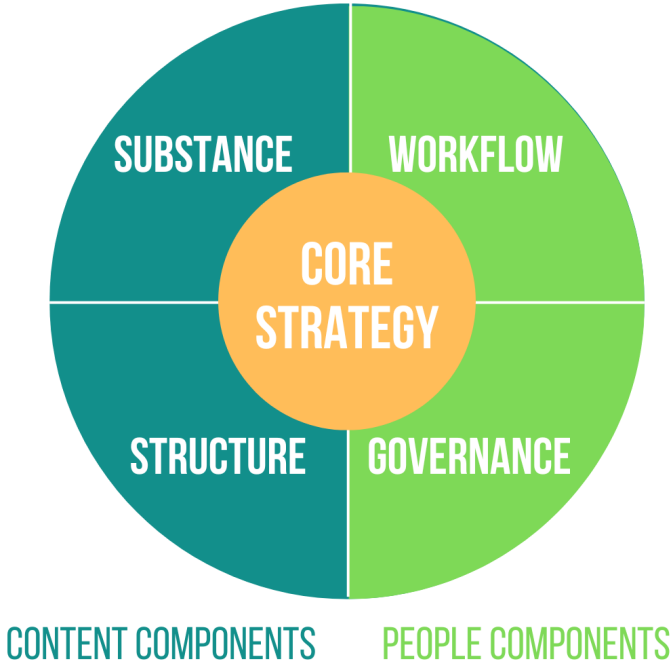
It also serves as a "guidebook", as Meghan Casey puts it in *The Content Strategy Toolkit*. It's a way for project members to "ensure that the resulting strategy and recommendations are addressing the right business goals, user needs, challenges, and opportunities" (Casey 122-123). This section of the proposal will clearly outline the different opportunities for the future of the website. The content alignment strategy will be defined by the following four key elements:

**Substance:** What kind of content do you need, and what messages does it need to communicate to your audience?

**Structure:** How is content best prioritized, organized, and displayed?

**Workflow:** What are the optimal processes, tools, and human resources required to support the content strategy?

**Governance:** How are key decisions about content and content strategy made?



# CONTENT ALIGNMENT SUMMARY

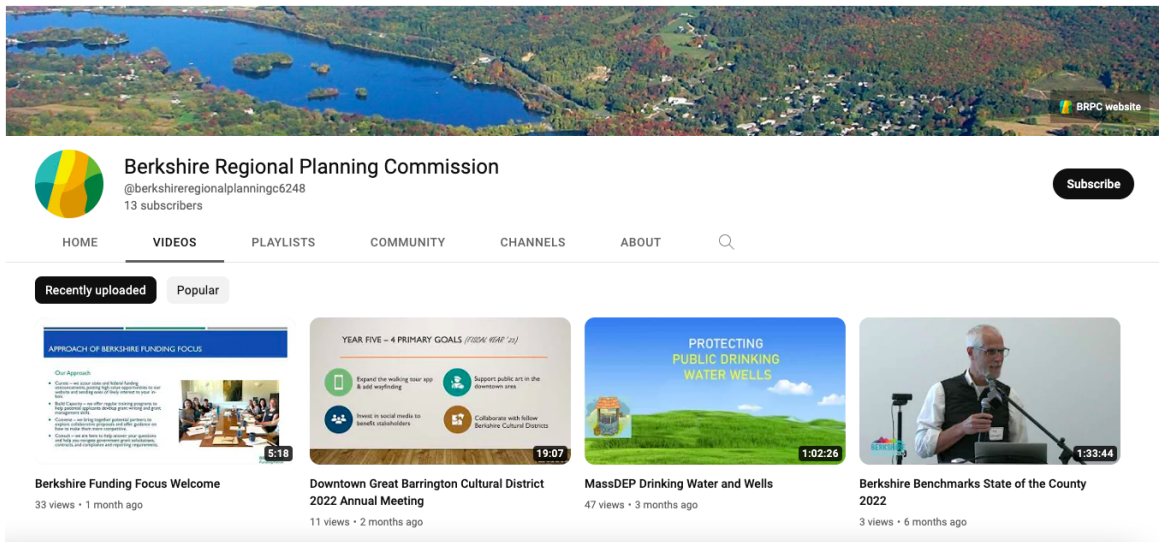
## Current Content

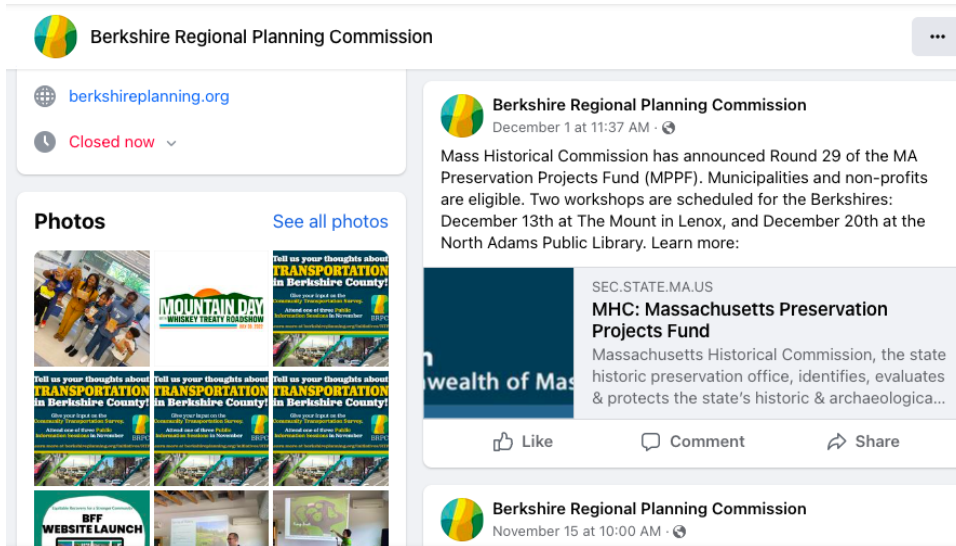
The BRPC website has very informative content throughout its current website. Some of the copy can be overwhelming or confusing to newcomers because, while there are lots of details on different pages, the descriptions are not always clear.

Content types:

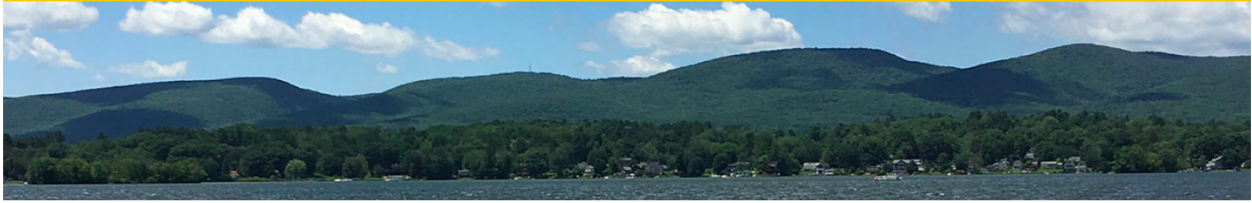
- Event calendar
- Monthly newsletter called "Common Ground" with the latest BRPC information and events
- Links to social media platforms, Facebook and YouTube, on website header – can access through an icon on the website's header; there is also a YouTube icon but it is blocked by the organization's phone number
  - Facebook presence is relatively active
- Fairly active YouTube channel that links back to the website in the banner image

See screenshots of BRPC's YouTube channel, newsletter, and Facebook page below.





Having media integrated into a website is important, whether it be images, videos, links to other media, etc. While the BRPC site effectively uses icons to link to other destinations, the images don't exactly flow with the website. Most of them are blurry and cropped awkwardly so that viewers can't really make out the full photo. They are all beautiful landscapes of the Berkshire area, so these images should definitely be more prominent to capitalize on the scenic location of Massachusetts. The images have a lot of potential but they are not formatted well. This image below from the 'Programs' page is just one of many examples.



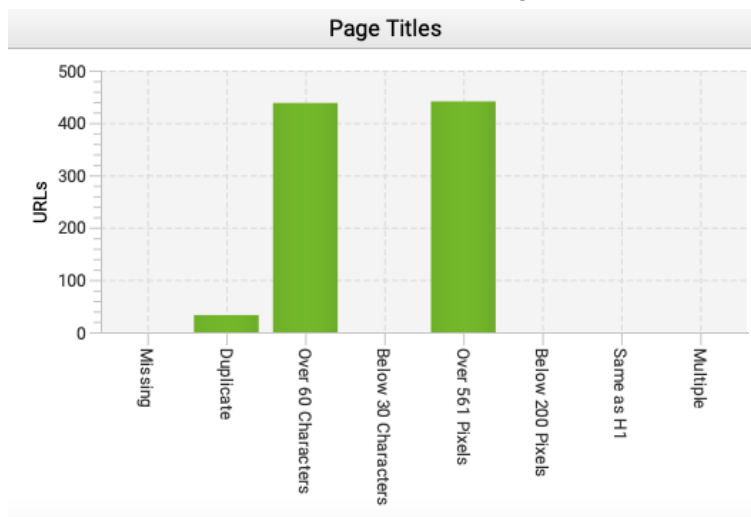
A blog page of some sort could also be beneficial to add to the website. It could have a different, more personal feel than the newsletter but also still be in line with the organization's other platforms and consistent with the overall voice.

## SEO ANALYSIS

A search engine optimization (SEO) audit was conducted using the Screaming Frog SEO Spider program. This program essentially "crawls" around the entire website and collects data from the inside and outside. For this analysis, we focused specifically on page titles, metadata, and headers throughout the website.

### Page Titles

A useful and simple way to navigate through a website is with the help of titles for each page. All page links on the BRPC website utilize the Title 1 titles. The page titles are collectively on the lengthier side, with the shortest one being 40 characters. The longest page title is 158 characters. All titles include "Berkshire Regional Planning Commission" in the copy which makes them longer. This makes SEO less ideal as this text can interfere with the actual titles of the pages.





# SEO ANALYSIS

The titles are straightforward overall and while they could be more detailed, they do a good job explaining their corresponding descriptions. One example of a good title is "Preparing for the Future of Work in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts". See more page title examples below.

Address	Occurrences	Title 1	Title 1 Length
https://berkshireplanning.org/	1	BRPC - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	45
https://berkshireplanning.org/grant-opportunities/	1	Grant Information - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	58
https://berkshireplanning.org/resources/	1	Resources - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	50
https://berkshireplanning.org/newsletter/	1	Newsletter - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	51
https://berkshireplanning.org/about/directions/	1	Directions - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	51
https://berkshireplanning.org/useful-links/	1	Useful Links - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	53
https://berkshireplanning.org/program/emergency-preparedness-planning/	1	Emergency Preparedness Planning Archives - Berkshire Regional Planni...	81
https://berkshireplanning.org/program/environmental-energy-planning/	1	Environmental & Energy Planning Archives - Berkshire Regional Planni...	81
https://berkshireplanning.org/about/agendas-and-minutes/	1	Agendas and Minutes - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	60
https://berkshireplanning.org/event/comprehensive-economic-development-strategy-2019-2021/	1	Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy - Berkshire Regional Pl...	84
https://berkshireplanning.org/about/our-communities/	1	Our Communities - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	56
https://berkshireplanning.org/category/in-the-media/	1	In the Media Archives - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	62
https://berkshireplanning.org/about/public-records/	1	Public Records - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	55
https://berkshireplanning.org/program/regional-initiatives/	1	Regional Initiatives & Services Archives - Berkshire Regional Planning C...	81
https://berkshireplanning.org/contact-2/	1	Contacts - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	49
https://berkshireplanning.org/program/data-information-services/	1	Data & Information Services Archives - Berkshire Regional Planning Co...	77
https://berkshireplanning.org/event/brpc-finance-committee/	1	BRPC Finance Committee - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	63
https://berkshireplanning.org/event/brpc-executive-committee-7/	1	BRPC Executive Committee - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	65
https://berkshireplanning.org/western-massachusetts-passenger-rail-commission-public-hearing-no-1/	1	Western Massachusetts Passenger Rail Commission Public Hearing No...	110
https://berkshireplanning.org/about/title-vi-nondiscrimination/	1	Title VI/Nondiscrimination - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	67
https://berkshireplanning.org/about/berkshires-tomorrow/	1	Berkshires Tomorrow Inc. - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	65
https://berkshireplanning.org/about/services/	1	Services - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	49
https://berkshireplanning.org/events/	1	Events Archive - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	55
https://berkshireplanning.org/program/public-health/	1	Public Health Archives - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	63
https://berkshireplanning.org/about/mission/	1	Mission - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	48
https://berkshireplanning.org/category/news-announcements/	1	News & Announcements Archives - Berkshire Regional Planning Commi...	70
https://berkshireplanning.org/program/economic-development/	1	Economic Development Archives - Berkshire Regional Planning Commis...	70
https://berkshireplanning.org/programs/	1	Programs - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	49

## Meta Description

Metadata is very important to have on a website. They give users the information they need to get where they need to go on a website and make a website more optimized. Meta description tags generally inform users with a short, relevant summary of what a certain page is about. Screaming Frog detected zero meta descriptions throughout the BRPC website. When ran through a second time to be sure, there was once again nothing found for metadata.

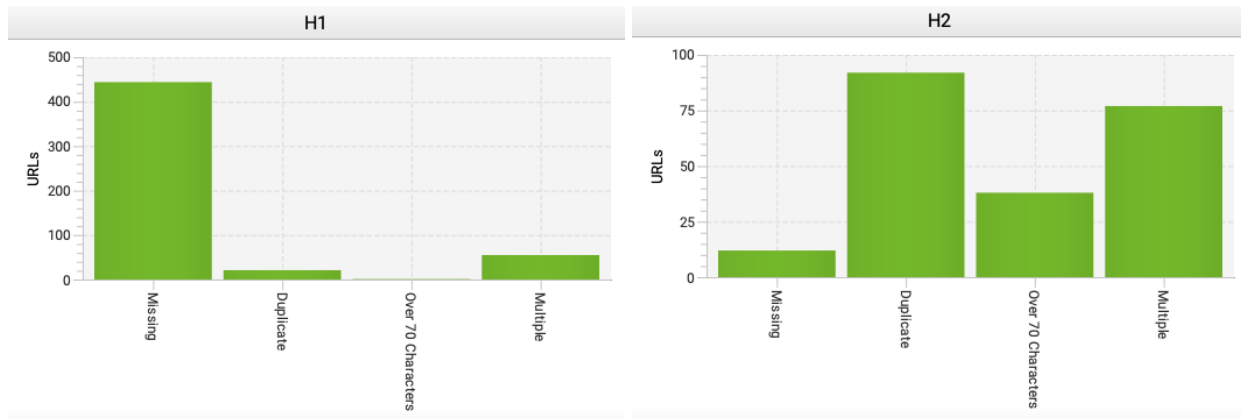
# SEO ANALYSIS

Address	Occurrences	Meta Description 1	Meta
1 https://berkshireplanning.org/	0		
2 https://berkshireplanning.org/grant-opportunities/	0		
3 https://berkshireplanning.org/resources/	0		
4 https://berkshireplanning.org/newsletter/	0		
5 https://berkshireplanning.org/about/directions/	0		
6 https://berkshireplanning.org/useful-links/	0		
7 https://berkshireplanning.org/program/emergency-preparedness-planning/	0		
8 https://berkshireplanning.org/program/environmental-energy-planning/	0		
9 https://berkshireplanning.org/about/agendas-and-minutes/	0		
10 https://berkshireplanning.org/event/comprehensive-economic-development-s...	0		
11 https://berkshireplanning.org/about/our-communities/	0		
12 https://berkshireplanning.org/category/in-the-media/	0		
13 https://berkshireplanning.org/about/public-records/	0		
14 https://berkshireplanning.org/program/regional-initiatives/	0		
15 https://berkshireplanning.org/contact-2/	0		
16 https://berkshireplanning.org/program/data-information-services/	0		
17 https://berkshireplanning.org/event/brpc-finance-committee/	0		
18 https://berkshireplanning.org/event/brpc-executive-committee-7/	0		
19 https://berkshireplanning.org/western-massachusetts-passenger-rail-commis...	0		
20 https://berkshireplanning.org/about/title-vi-nondiscrimination/	0		
21 https://berkshireplanning.org/about/berkshires-tomorrow/	0		
22 https://berkshireplanning.org/about/services/	0		
23 https://berkshireplanning.org/events/	0		
24 https://berkshireplanning.org/program/public-health/	0		
25 https://berkshireplanning.org/about/mission/	0		
26 https://berkshireplanning.org/category/news-announcements/	0		
27 https://berkshireplanning.org/program/economic-development/	0		
28 https://berkshireplanning.org/programs/	0		
29 https://berkshireplanning.org/resources/planning-toolkit/	0		

This is certainly a cause for concern, as meta descriptions are crucial to have on a website to help a user find what they are looking for. Implementing descriptive tags into all areas of the website would be ideal for a successful website.

## Headers

The site utilizes H2 headers but not H1. Nevertheless, the headers do a good job of describing the components of the pages they correspond to.



While there are no H1 elements, the H2 elements are very effective and descriptive. One prime example is "Berkshire Innovation Center gets nearly \$1 million to create 'manufacturing academy'". This very clearly describes what the page or link is about

without being too wordy. It may be wise to shift these H2 elements over to the primary header for SEO purposes.

Address	Occurrences	H2-1
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/">https://berkshireplanning.org/</a>	2	Hot Topics
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/grant-opportunities/">https://berkshireplanning.org/grant-opportunities/</a>	1	Grant Information
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/resources/">https://berkshireplanning.org/resources/</a>	2	Resources
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/newsletter/">https://berkshireplanning.org/newsletter/</a>	2	Newsletter
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/about/directions/">https://berkshireplanning.org/about/directions/</a>	2	Directions
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/useful-links/">https://berkshireplanning.org/useful-links/</a>	2	Useful Links
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/program/emergency-p...">https://berkshireplanning.org/program/emergency-p...</a>	2	Emergency Preparedness Planning
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/program/environment...">https://berkshireplanning.org/program/environment...</a>	2	Environmental & Energy Planning
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/about/agendas-and-m...">https://berkshireplanning.org/about/agendas-and-m...</a>	2	Agendas and Minutes
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/event/comprehensive-...">https://berkshireplanning.org/event/comprehensive-...</a>	2	December 14 @ 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/about/our-communities/">https://berkshireplanning.org/about/our-communities/</a>	2	Our Communities
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/category/in-the-media/">https://berkshireplanning.org/category/in-the-media/</a>	2	Berkshire Innovation Center gets nearly \$1 million to create 'manufactur...
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/about/public-records/">https://berkshireplanning.org/about/public-records/</a>	2	Public Records
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/program/regional-initi...">https://berkshireplanning.org/program/regional-initi...</a>	2	Regional Initiatives & Services
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/contact-2/">https://berkshireplanning.org/contact-2/</a>	1	Contacts
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/program/data-informa...">https://berkshireplanning.org/program/data-informa...</a>	2	Data & Information Services
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/event/brpc-finance-co...">https://berkshireplanning.org/event/brpc-finance-co...</a>	2	December 15 @ 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/event/brpc-executive-...">https://berkshireplanning.org/event/brpc-executive-...</a>	2	February 2, 2023 @ 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/western-massachuset...">https://berkshireplanning.org/western-massachuset...</a>	1	Western Massachusetts Passenger Rail Commission Public Hearing No...
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/about/title-vi-nondiscr...">https://berkshireplanning.org/about/title-vi-nondiscr...</a>	2	Title VI/Nondiscrimination
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/about/berkshires-tom...">https://berkshireplanning.org/about/berkshires-tom...</a>	1	Berkshires Tomorrow Inc.
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/about/services/">https://berkshireplanning.org/about/services/</a>	2	Services
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/events/">https://berkshireplanning.org/events/</a>	2	Events Search and Views Navigation
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/program/public-health/">https://berkshireplanning.org/program/public-health/</a>	2	Public Health
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/about/mission/">https://berkshireplanning.org/about/mission/</a>	2	Mission
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/category/news-annou...">https://berkshireplanning.org/category/news-annou...</a>	2	Western Massachusetts Passenger Rail Commission Public Hearing No...
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/program/economic-de...">https://berkshireplanning.org/program/economic-de...</a>	2	Economic Development
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/programs/">https://berkshireplanning.org/programs/</a>	1	Programs
<a href="https://berkshireplanning.org/resources/planning-to...">https://berkshireplanning.org/resources/planning-to...</a>	1	Planning Toolkit

# ACCESSIBILITY

When a website has accessibility, it means that it accommodates all web viewers. This includes web viewers with disabilities such as people with vision or hearing impairments along with those having temporary disabilities. These can be Wi-Fi issues or screen viewing difficulty due to being in an area that is too bright or too dark. Having an accessible website is vital for a successful organization.

We ran the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission's website through the WAVE Accessibility Tool. It came back with one error and eight alerts. It also found that many of the header elements on the homepage are H3 headers. There were also 2 contrast errors.

Additionally, there are no alt tags detected on any of the images throughout the website. Alt tags are important for SEO to identify elements of images. For example, this image below from the website's "About" page should contain alt tags that are

relevant to what the image shows, such as 'river, fall, trees, leaves, foliage, landscape,' etc.



Implementing alt tags to all of the images throughout the BRPC website will help it become more optimized and easy to navigate through. Overall, the site needs more accessibility.

## WRITING

The writing component can truly make or break a website. You can have a nicely laid out and formatted site, but without good writing that readers can understand and engage with, it is very hard to retain these visitors. BRPC has good writing throughout its site overall, but it does sound a bit formal to a degree that some may not resonate with. See this snippet from their "Mission" section below for an example.

### Mission

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission was organized in 1966 by the votes of ten cities and towns in Berkshire County. On May 9, 1966, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts approved the ten-member region and designated its area of jurisdiction as being the 32 municipalities that comprise Berkshire County. Since then, all 32 municipalities have voted to join the Commission as members.

The powers and duties of the Commission are set forth in Chapter 40B of the General Laws of Massachusetts. This law, adopted originally in 1955, has been strengthened by subsequent actions of the legislature. Chapter 40B is often referred to as "The Regional Planning Law." [Click to read 40B.](#)

On the contrary, their social media presence takes a bit of a softer, informal tone in their posts and gives it more of a contemporary feel with their image choices, making it suitable for a more general audience. They both have the same overall

voice and goal as an organization on both platforms, but they are not exactly aligned. Take a look at this Facebook post below:



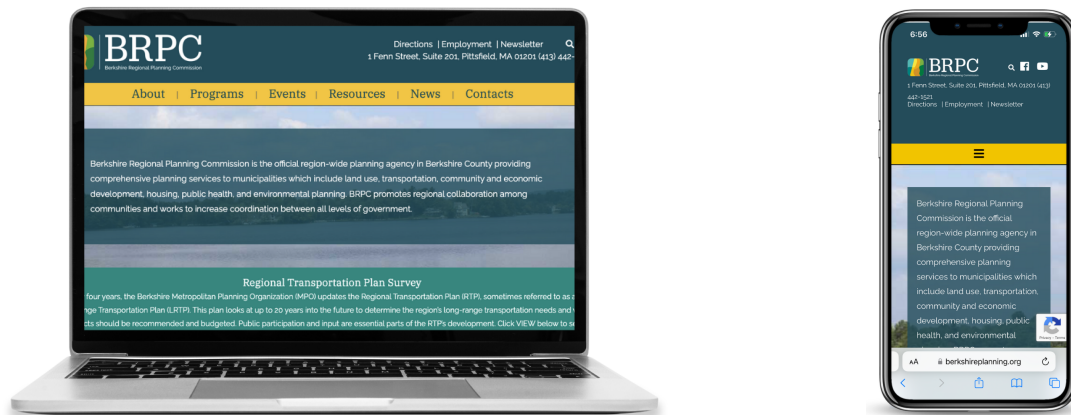
It would be optimal to integrate these two tones into one single voice that represents the organization across all media. Taking the professionalism of the website's writing style and combining it with the friendliness of the social media approach would make for a very strong writing style. Merging these together would also help create a more solidified audience for the organization.

The writing style within the website is also inconsistent. While the 'Missions' page is very detailed and word-heavy, the 'Programs' page is very brief and doesn't give readers much information on valuable parts of the organization.

# ARCHITECTURE

The way a website is structured and formatted is a key element for its success. It is important to have an architecture that is easy for a visitor to navigate through and not get lost. The BRPC website's architecture is relatively decent, but it does have areas for concern in this department.

The site is somewhat mobile-friendly. Testing this on an actual mobile device (iPhone 13) as well as shrinking the desktop window on a MacBook Air to a smaller, mobile-equivalent size confirmed that this website can be used across multiple devices. However, when going to click the different tabs, it does not give the dropdown menus that it gives on the desktop version. This makes it more difficult for mobile visitors to make their way through the site successfully. Aiming to become more mobile-friendly is one of the top priorities mentioned in the RFP, and this is very important when designing a website to reach more audiences.



Their dropdown menus, while informative, could be a bit overwhelming for newcomers who have no idea what the organization is about. After clicking the 'About' tab, patrons are bombarded with all of these options below to click on when they should just be given basic information about the organization. While 'Missions' does the job of explaining the organization's purpose, there is no actual individual 'About' page.

Mission
Services
Commission & Committees
Employment
Directions
Agendas and Minutes
Ethics Law Compliance and Open Meeting Law
Our Communities
Title VI/Nondiscrimination
Public Records
Berkshires Tomorrow, Inc.

There is also a search function on the website and it works relatively well. It gives accurate results based on keywords that are searched, but the result pages are rather lengthy and don't always give an exact answer. Moreover, the search bar disappears after you enter your search terms so you cannot go back to edit or change your search; you have to go up to the search icon again to start a new search.

## COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

To get a gauge of what content, practices, and strategies work best (or worst), we explored websites for other planning commissions/government agencies. Having this understanding and background knowledge of what “competitors” are doing gives us a clearer idea of what major facets to emulate for the BRPC website, as well as which factors to avoid.

### Montgomery County, PA

- Clear banner images at the top of the pages
- Good image/text balance
- Descriptions aren't too text-heavy or overwhelming and written in layman's terms
- Some links to different parts of the site open new tabs
- “How do I...?” section



Mission

The mission of the Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) is to strive to maintain and improve Montgomery County's quality of life by promoting sound planning, strengthening the transportation network, supporting healthy and prosperous communities, and working to create vibrant places and protect natural and historic resources.

We will use our expertise to proactively guide strategic and long-range decisions through high-quality and innovative plans, promotion of choices, collaboration, engagement, and balancing competing interests, under the direction of the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners. For more about MCPC, see our agency brochure.

Brookfield, CT

- Outdated design
● Nice banner images in a slideshow at top of the pages
● Fair image/text balance
● Overwhelming dropdown menus
● Video projects showcasing town
● "How do I...?" section





# THE STRATEGY

After conducting this extensive research, we were able to come up with objectives to help the BRPC improve its website and achieve its goals.

- Design and maintain a clean, modern website with intuitive UX.
- Build and maintain relationships with people from within and outside the Berkshires.
- Allow users to view and learn more about the latest events in the region.
- Allow users to view the Berkshires' outdoor recreation opportunities under a smooth navigation process.
- Allow registered and approved users/members to post events smoothly.
- Demonstrate transparency by allowing BRPC members (and all users) to view all past and current projects, agendas, and minutes.

Overall, the strategy involves redesigning the current website while adding the new recreation-based features highlighted in the RFP.

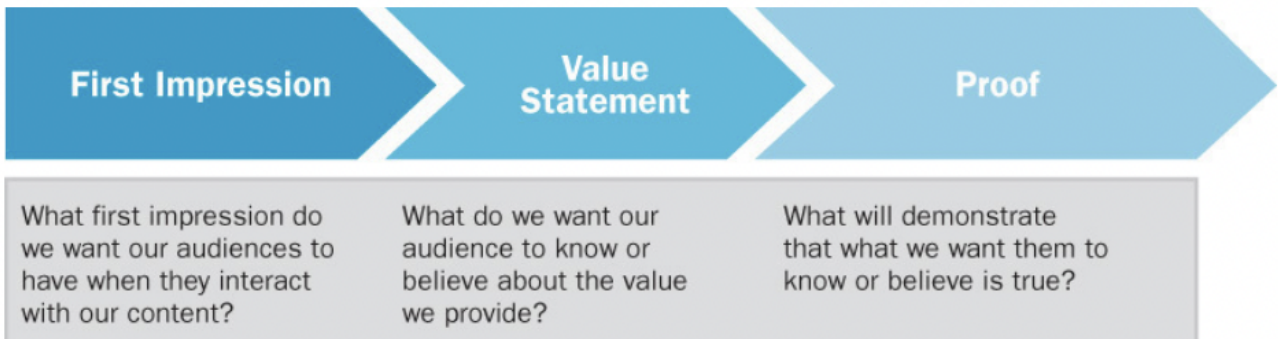
## Core Strategy Statement

We fabricated a statement to represent the core of our content strategy based on the goals we've set. This statement will help to solidify the plan we have put in place and ensures that everyone involved is on the same page.

*To enhance the image of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and satisfy the needs of current and prospective users, we will design content that is accessible, engaging and stands out from others in an effort to become a trusted government organization with long-term consumers.*

## Messaging Framework

The messaging framework lays out “what you want your audience to know and believe about you, and tries to prove that this message is true” (Casey 142). It helps set the stage for content design, and all pieces of content should follow suit according to this framework. If they don't, they should be reevaluated or removed. Based on this guide from Meghan Casey's book, we have devised our own framework.



Source: *The Content Strategy Toolkit* by Meghan Casey

"This is exactly what I'm looking for."	"I trust the information on this website."	"I see that they are transparent with everything, from showing activity opportunities to revealing their behind-the-scenes plans and processes."
"There's a lot of features and services I wasn't aware of."	"Whatever I need regarding events, recreation, or planning in the Berkshires, I can find right here."	"People like me contribute to their support content (i.e. event posts), so I trust that the information is accurate."
"I'm able to easily use this website despite being visually impaired."	"I feel recognized as a disabled person viewing this website."	"The writing and images are clear and easy to see and comprehend."

# CONTENT DESIGN

## Prioritization

Not all content is created equal; some content is more important to users and the business than other content. Therefore, two matrices were created to determine the relative importance of current and proposed content to its users and the BRPC, and hence where the BRPC should be prioritizing their efforts.

According to the RFP, the BRPC's target audiences are residents and visitors who are interested in recreation and events in the Berkshires. Additionally, the BRPC serves current members involved in the organization as well as event organizers and property managers who want to post events and get more involved.

The table below identifies:

- What content the site should **focus** on because it's important for both the BRPC and their users
- What content is needed to **guide** users forward because it's important to them, but not necessarily to the BRPC
- What content the BRPC may want to **drive** people to because it's beneficial for them, but not exactly what users were looking for
- What content the BRPC will probably include (labeled "**meh**" content) but is not really beneficial to anyone

<p><b>DRIVE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eNewsletter</li> <li>• Social media channels</li> <li>• Referral links to content from partnered organizations</li> <li>• Apply for membership</li> </ul>	<p><b>FOCUS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor recreation mapping</li> <li>• Informational resources (activities, guides, clubs, retailers)</li> <li>• Events calendar</li> <li>• Blog</li> <li>• Employment opportunities</li> </ul>
<p><b>MEH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• History and land acknowledgment</li> <li>• Title IV</li> </ul>	<p><b>GUIDE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About us/our mission</li> <li>• Contact information</li> <li>• List of programs/projects</li> <li>• Committee agendas and minutes</li> </ul>

The next table takes those prioritization ideas into more detail by matching the assigned content with specific user scenarios.

USER SCENARIO	SEGMENT	FOCUS	DRIVE	GUIDE
I plan to travel to the Berkshires and I'm looking for things to do.	Prospect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–Outdoor recreation mapping feature</li> <li>–Events calendar</li> <li>–Resources on activities, guides, and retailers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–Social media channels</li> <li>–eNewsletter</li> <li>–Referral links</li> </ul>	
I want to learn more about the Berkshires and what they have to offer.	Prospect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–Resources on activities and guides</li> <li>–Blog</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–Social media channels</li> <li>–Referral links</li> </ul>	–About us/our mission
I want to get more involved in the Berkshires community and maybe participate in the planning and organizing of events.	Resident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–Employment opportunities</li> <li>–Events calendar</li> <li>–Resources on clubs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–Social media channels</li> <li>–eNewsletter</li> </ul>	–Contact information
I am an event organizer and want to post an event on the website.	Registered User	–Events calendar	–Apply for membership (if not registered)	
I missed last week's committee meeting and I need to review what I missed.	BRPC Member			–Committee agendas and minutes

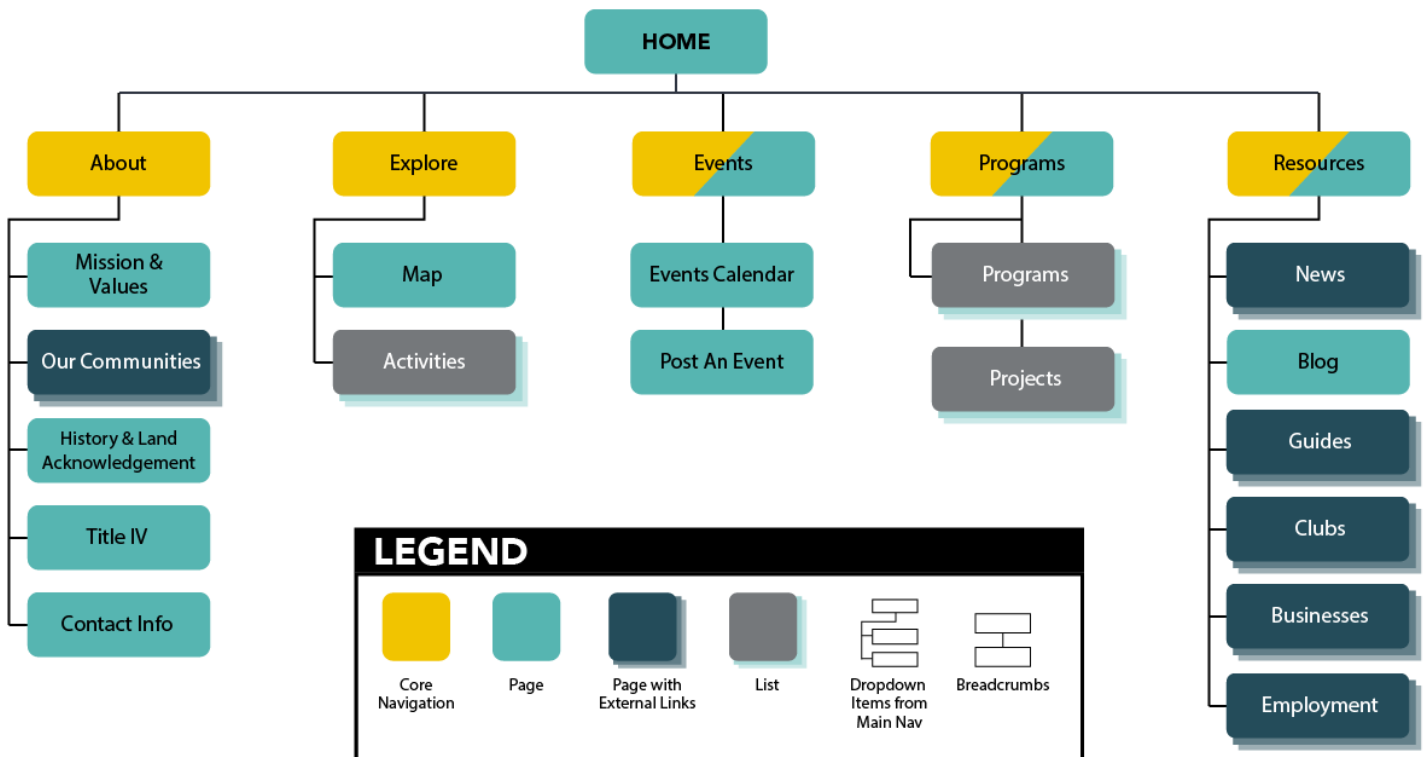
## Content Model

In this section, we match BRPC business goals with the content priorities highlighted in the previous section in order to arrive at a selection of core pages for the new site.

GOAL	CORE LIST(s)	CORE PAGE(s)	CORE PAGE CONTENT
Allow users to view outdoor recreation opportunities under a smooth navigation process.	Explore Recreation (dropdown includes recreation types and Explore by Map)	Explore by Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Google Maps plugin</li> <li>• Filters by type and location</li> <li>• Images</li> <li>• Descriptions</li> <li>• List of available activities with icons</li> <li>• Links to owners' websites</li> </ul>
Allow users to view and learn more about the latest upcoming events.	N/A	Events Calendar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calendar plugin</li> <li>• Filters by event type</li> <li>• Links to event details pages which include referral links</li> </ul>
Allow registered users/members to post events.	N/A	Events Calendar → Post an Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prompt user to login</li> <li>• Link to apply for membership (if not registered)</li> <li>• Form, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Event title</li> <li>○ Event description</li> <li>○ Address</li> <li>○ Website</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Allow BRPC members to view past and current projects, agendas, and minutes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of programs List of projects</li> <li>• List of agendas and minutes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs → Projects of respective program</li> <li>• Agendas and Minutes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ List of projects, initiatives, and reports</li> <li>○ Links to additional details and PDF's</li> </ul> </li> <li>• For agendas/minutes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Table list of agendas and minutes sorted by year in descending order</li> <li>○ Links to PDF's</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

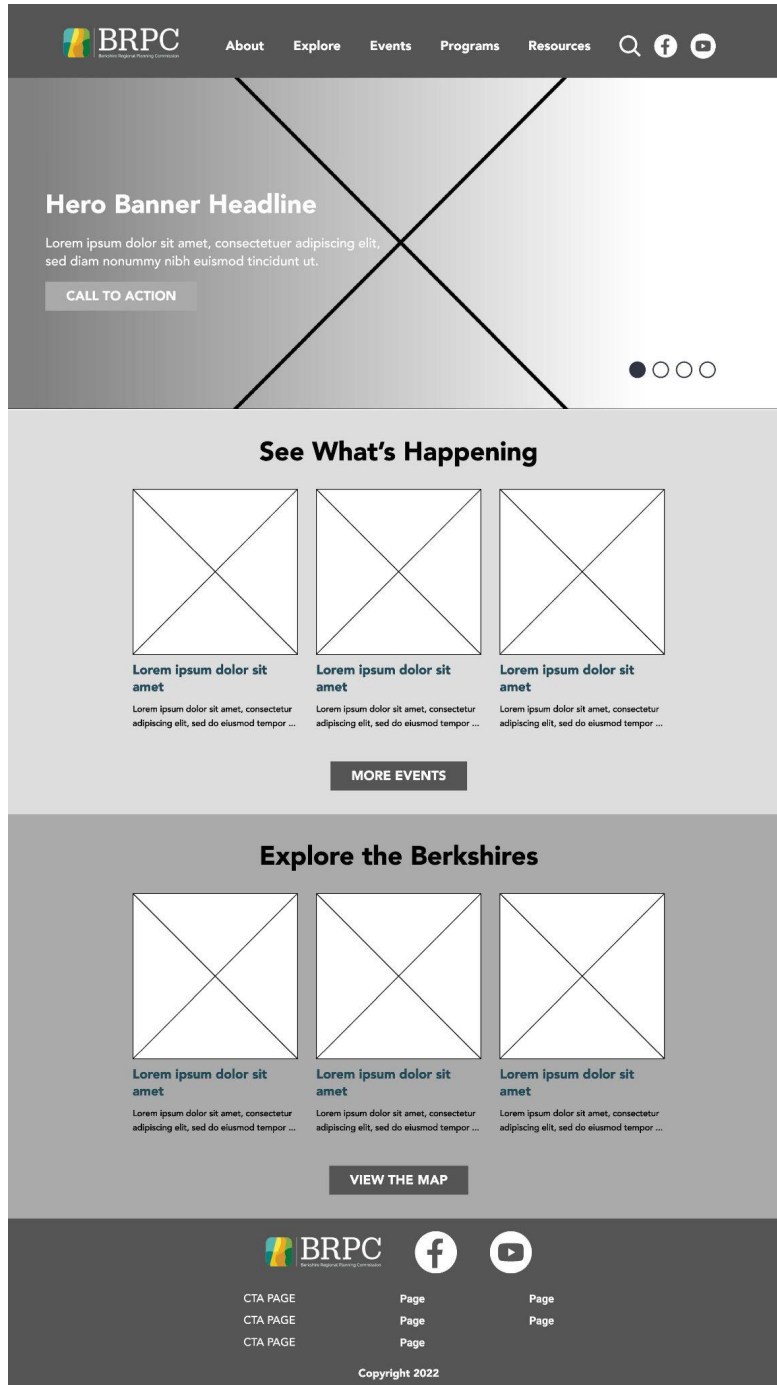
# Organization

This section shows how the new site should be structured based on the prioritization table. In the sitemap below, the categories in the main navigation menu are what branch from the homepage. Much of the content below the categories would be found in the respective category's dropdown, while some would be found in breadcrumbs upon visiting its parent page. Additionally, some of the navigation categories would also be pages of their own that host the content in order to reduce clutter in the dropdowns.



# Presentation

Here, we have proposed basic wireframes for some of the key pages on the site. These key pages are the homepage, the Events Calendar, and the proposed Map feature under the Explore section. Some elements remain the same for continuity, such as the header, main navigation, and footer, while each page delivers content that serve important purposes for the BRPC's users.



Events >> Events Calendar

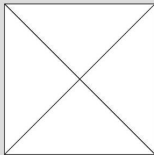
### Events Calendar

POST YOUR EVENT

< PREV MONTH NEXT >

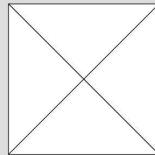
	Event Link					
				Event Link	Event Link	Event Link
			Event Link			
	Event Link	Event Link				
Event Link			Event Link			

### See Berkshire Events



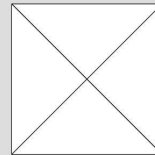
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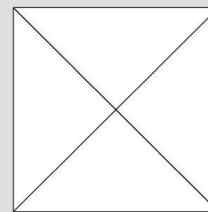
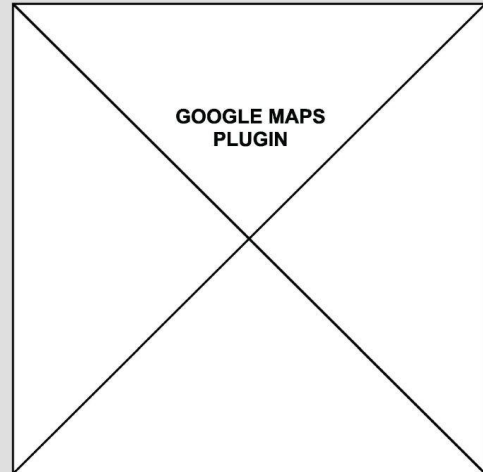
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Explore >> Map

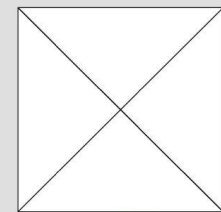
### Explore Recreation Map

FILTER BY: Type Location



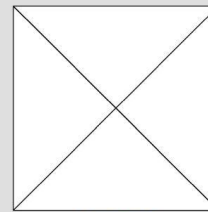
ACTIVITY

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor ...



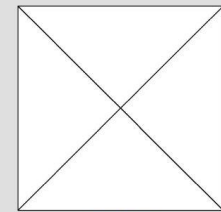
ACTIVITY

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ACTIVITY

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# WRITING STYLE GUIDE

For the success of the BRPC and Berkshire recreation, it is crucial to write in a voice and tone that is appropriate for all of our audiences.

Our voice is the personality we convey across the board. In this case, our voice must be professional and trustworthy across the entire website, providing the highest standards of service for the Berkshires.

Our tone is the attitude toward the subject matter or audience that we are addressing. Therefore, our tone should vary (albeit not too drastically) depending on who we are writing to and what the subject matter is.

- If we are addressing prospective visitors or tourists, then our tone should be friendly and conversational but remain professional. If said visitor group is more specific, such as an older audience, then that must be factored into our writing.
- If we are addressing event organizers or property managers, then our tone should be informative but clear, and we should encourage them to be friendly and informative when writing events for their audiences.
- If we are addressing current BRPC members, then our tone should be very informative but not overwhelming.

## Best General Practices

- Write in an active voice.
- Grammar, spelling, and punctuation checks are a must everywhere; any errors here diminish our credibility.
- Make clear and encouraging calls to action.
- Lists over paragraphs are preferred when addressing steps to one topic.
- Writing should be as clear and non-technical as possible, especially in areas where new visitors and prospects are most likely to be.

# WRITING STYLE GUIDE

## Practices for Mediums

- **Website**
  - Every image should have clear and descriptive alt text. Our content is shared with people of varied capabilities, so we should not be excluding those who use screen readers and the like (see Accessibility section for details).
  - Each page should have a meta description that articulates the content on the page. The length should be around 150 characters.
  - Always write with SEO in mind (see SEO section for details).
  - Include hyperlinks to affiliates' websites where they are mentioned.
  - What is new, especially new events, should be pushed in areas such as the homepage.
- **Social Media**
  - Posts should always be concise and friendly; too long or too technical posts will hinder engagements.
  - YouTube videos should convey the same voice and tone as written content.
  - Be careful and considerate about what you post. Social platforms are public spaces, and we want to be inclusive of people of all backgrounds.
- **Newsletter**
  - Establish a hierarchy; prioritize important and new content, information, and updates.
  - Be informative but concise; our subscribers are looking to be educated but not overwhelmed by text.
  - Include clear calls to action with links to additional relevant content under each section or content piece.

# KPIs FOR SUCCESS

The success of the BRPC website can be determined by a variety of measurable factors called key performance indicators (KPIs). The following are the main KPIs that we should focus on.

**Website Traffic:** We are looking to increase traffic with our new website so long as we stick to the techniques highlighted throughout this proposal. Important metrics for measuring traffic include

- **Unique Visitors:** This is a good way of showing which content is most relevant and what is not so much. It can come in the form of users and new users in Google Analytics, although this doesn't consider when a returning user deletes cookies.
- **Pageviews:** Unlike with users, pageviews may include multiple visits and refreshes from one user. Nonetheless, this is still an important metric for helping determine what content our audiences are interested in.
- **Pages per Session/Bounce Rate:** Both of these show how long people are staying on our site. The higher the pages per session and the lower the bounce rate, the better.

**Reach:** We want our content to be seen by as many users as possible on our social media channels, especially event and recreation advertisements. Of course, our reach should prioritize those who live in Berkshire County, then the surrounding areas, and then the Northeast.

**Engagements:** We are looking to increase engagements on our posts across all social channels. Expanding our reach may also translate to more engagements, but we also must determine what kind of content sparks the most interest.

**Newsletter Signups:** This includes the number of newsletter signups over a period of time but also includes the sources from where the signups are being directed.

**Member Signups:** Similar to the newsletter signups. We want to increase participation from valued members of our community.

# NEXT STEPS

This section is intended to explain what is needed for the BRPC to take this content strategy into action.

## Roles and Responsibilities

First, we will need to choose a content management model that will best help the BRPC achieve its content strategy. There is the *centralized model*, which assigns all content creation, editing, and publishing to one department or team. On the other hand, there is the *decentralized model*, where departments or teams throughout the organization are responsible for their own content management. However, what we believe would be most appropriate for the BRPC is a **hybrid model**, which combines aspects of the centralized and decentralized models.

To elaborate, various teams throughout the BRPC would be responsible for creating their respective content, but then they would send off their content to one central editor or editing team to review, revise, and give the green light to publish. For example, the marketing team would make content for social media and the newsletter, while the respective committees within the BRPC would be in charge of their own content. But before publishing anything, the editor reviews and revises the content. This may also include content sent by event organizers and property managers that we work with.

The following roles and responsibilities are necessary to properly create content and to make the content process more efficient. They are explained with respect to the hybrid model but can be revised for any model of choice if the BRPC decides that these roles should be either more centralized or more distributed among the staff.

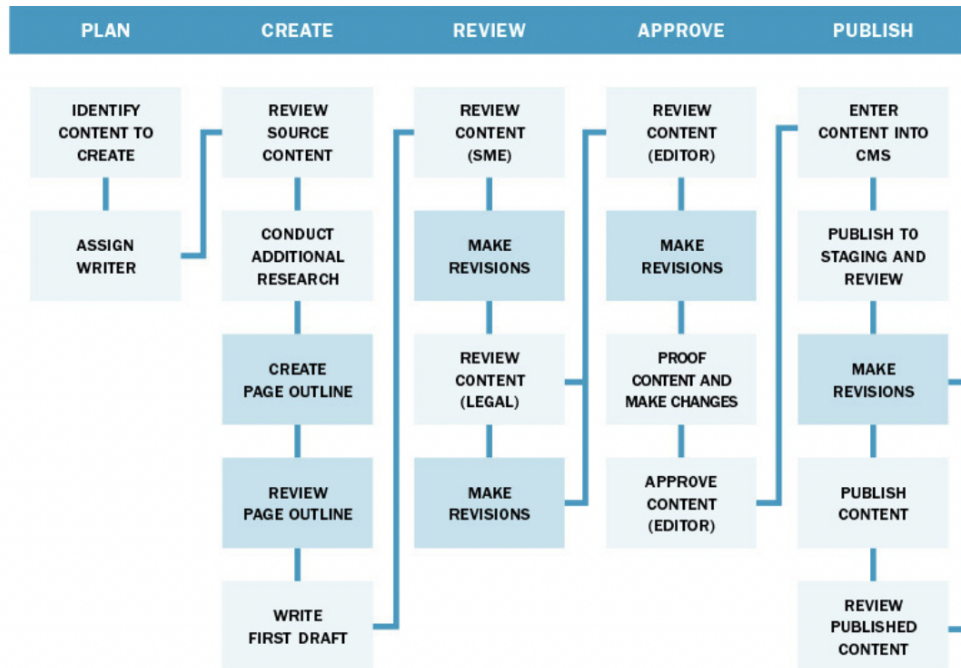
- **Editor**
  - Reviews content and provides feedback to make sure it is on par with BRPC standards and in accordance with the strategy
  - Will also act as the Proofer to check for grammar, spelling, and punctuation
  - May also work with outside event organizers who send in their content to be published
- **Owner**
  - Reviews content from a business owner's perspective

- Serves as the primary contact for content-related questions, especially for the website
- **Writer**
  - Responsible for writing and creating the content
  - Defines content specifications or outlines where necessary
  - Additional research may be performed, depending on what needs to be done
  - Each team may have their own Writer
- **Subject Matter Expert (SME)**
  - Assures that the information is accurate and up to date
  - Each team may have their own SME
- **Publisher**
  - Responsible for publishing the content once it has been reviewed and approved
  - The marketing team will have their own publisher (ideally the Social Media Manager) for social media and newsletter content, while one or two people (ideally the Editor) will publish and update content on the website.

# NEXT STEPS

## Content Creation Process

The process that goes into content creation must be organized and well-defined to ensure that content creation and publishing are on-strategy. The high-level workflow diagram shown below can be used as a guide, as it clearly defines the steps—and potential step revisits—that may be needed.



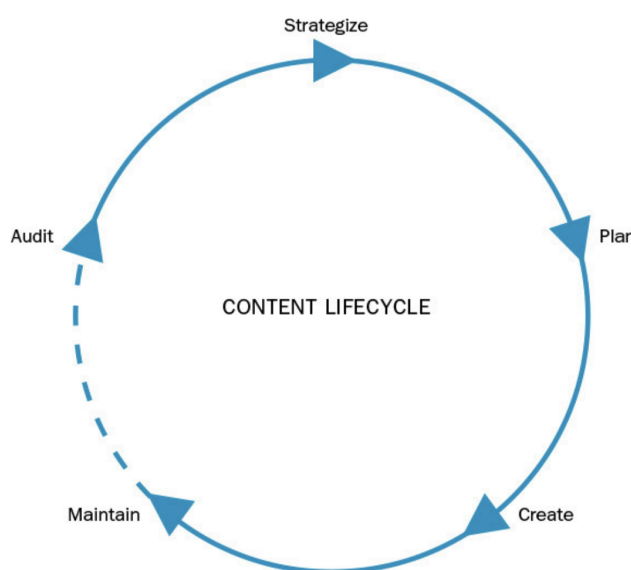
Source: *The Content Strategy Toolkit* by Meghan Casey

This diagram does not have to be followed verbatim. Further, the boxes in dark blue represent steps that may not be necessary or applicable everywhere. For example, the writer(s) may not need to create outlines, and the publisher will probably not often need to make revisions if that responsibility is given to the editor.

# NEXT STEPS

## Content Lifecycle

At this point, while we may have a solid foundation on the strategy and its many processes and guidelines, how do we ensure that the strategy is enforced and reassessed, and how do we ensure that the content is continually revisited and updated? Content and business priorities change over time as we gain, change, or lose audiences and business partners, which may result in changes to the strategy. Therefore, referring to the Content Lifecycle should allow the BRPC to ensure that content is always relevant, up-to-date, and on-strategy.



*Diagram developed by Erin Scime, found in The Content Strategy Toolkit by Meghan Casey*

There are five stages according to the Content Lifecycle diagram. They are detailed as such:

- **Strategize:** Define the needed content, who it's for, and how it should be organized and viewed. That is the main purpose of this report.
- **Plan:** Detail roles, responsibilities, and processes. That is also covered in this report.
- **Create:** Set up tools that help people of respective roles create, approve, and publish content.
- **Maintain:** Review all content—even the content that rarely changes—and make updates where necessary.
- **Audit:** Measure how the content is performing, which may support any proposed changes to the strategy.

# CLOSING REMINDERS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- BRPC's target audiences include residents and visitors who are interested in recreation and events in the Berkshires, event organizers and property managers who want to post events and get more involved with the BRPC, and current BRPC members.
- Once the rebuild of the website is pursued, the BRPC must make sure that the new site is more mobile-friendly.
- The details in this strategy are not set in stone; we encourage the strategy to be reevaluated and updated regularly as incentives change.
- Members from each team at the BRPC should meet at least annually to review the strategy and revise where needed.