

# The Pioneer Valley Plan for Progress: A Playbook For Making It Happen

2006



PLAN FOR **PROGRESS**

ECONOMIC STRATEGIES FOR THE REGION



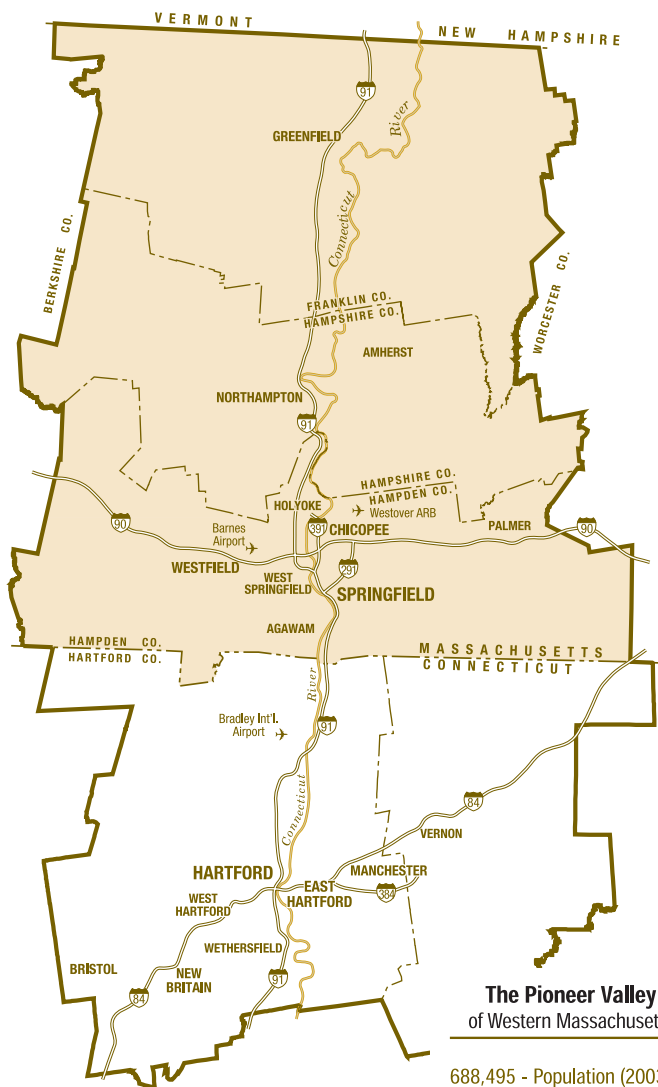
## INTRODUCTION to the Plan for Progress

The current Pioneer Valley Plan for Progress maps out a game plan for achieving economic success based on an understanding of the region's assets and opportunities, as well as past accomplishments, ongoing initiatives of the original 1994 Plan for Progress, and current challenges.

The 1994 version of the Plan was created as a blueprint for growth and development of the regional economy, but the current Plan for Progress reflects a broader concept of regional development – one that capitalizes on the opinions, ideas, and perspectives of countless people within the Pioneer Valley region, in the belief that those who live, work, and play here are knowledgeable about existing conditions, and aware of subtle changes at local levels that can affect the region's realization of its potential for growth and economic prosperity.

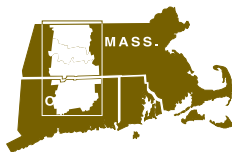
### Primary Assumptions Underlying this Regional Endeavor

- The Pioneer Valley region's next economic wave is not waiting to happen – **it has to be created** and then continually updated and refined.
- The Pioneer Valley can positively influence its economic future, but first the region has to collectively decide what kind of economic future it wants and then establish a **strategic plan** to achieve this end - that is, planning and doing.



### The Pioneer Valley of Western Massachusetts

688,495 - Population (2003)  
69 - Municipalities  
1,904 - Square Miles  
285, 064 - Employment (2002)  
18,505 - No. of Businesses (2002)



5 0 10 Miles

- Pioneer Valley
- Hartford - Springfield Knowledge Corridor

- If the Pioneer Valley is to successfully compete in an already global marketplace, it has to learn to act, not simply talk, **regionally**.
- Ongoing **collaboration** by the Pioneer Valley's public, private, and civic sectors is essential to the region's prospects for future economic growth and job expansion.
- An **open, inclusive, and participatory process is essential** for enlisting broad interest and support from the region's public, private, and civic sectors as well as the general public.
- Looking to the future, **maintaining and growing a highly educated, skilled, and innovative work force** will be pivotal if the Pioneer Valley is to remain strong, economically competitive, and capable of sustained economic progress.

### Key Building Blocks of the Plan for Progress

In early 2003, Plan for Progress stakeholders determined that it was time to overhaul the Plan and began a major process of gathering data, conducting focus groups, rewriting and updating strategies, and reaching out to involve new players in the Plan's future.

What emerged from the process was a new vision of a Pioneer Valley with

A strong, vibrant regional economy that fosters sustainability, prosperity, and collaboration, and attracts national recognition

This vision is expressed through seven cross-cutting themes that form the guiding principles of the Plan for Progress. In practice, 13 strategic goals guide the implementation of these principles, and present tangible action steps for realizing the vision.

Developing the new Plan for Progress was a cumulative process that built upon the 1994 Plan and an assessment of its impact with three key tools:

- Annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy reports (as mandated by the U.S. Economic Development

Administration), prepared by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, which tracked and evaluated yearly progress on economic goals.

- Research into the region's current economic climate, performed by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, which provided insight into the current state of the region's economy and people.
- A wide-ranging series of focus group sessions on a variety of topics held during 2003 and 2004, which brought together business people, local government officials, community leaders, and representatives from academic and charitable institutions to discuss economic data, industry clusters, housing, urban investment, education, workforce development, infrastructure, and small businesses.

The result of this undertaking, the 2004 Plan for Progress, features a description of our region today, including demographics, geography, regional assets, employment, and education data. It follows the same successful model of its predecessor, centering on strategies that have been developed through focus groups, research, and business community participation.

### Cross-Cutting Themes

The seven cross-cutting themes contained in this Plan are:

- **Cross-border collaboration** – partnering with the greater Hartford region to promote a globally competitive cross-border regional economic identity.
- **Diversity** – appreciating and encouraging diversity throughout our region.
- **Education** – taking advantage of the region's significant higher education assets and creating cross-sector partnerships to improve on weaknesses.
- **Industry clusters** – supporting those industries that show great promise (education and knowledge creation, health care, hospitality and tourism, retail, life sciences, medical devices and pharmaceuticals, and plastics) and sustaining those that already exist (agriculture and organic farming; paper and paper converting; building

fixtures, equipment, and services; financial services; metal manufacturing and production technology; and printing and publishing).

- **Sustainability** – promoting responsible land development patterns that are economically sound and considerate of social and environmental needs.
- **Technology** – leveraging technology to improve socio-economic outcomes across the region and building the business community's technological capacity.
- **Urban investment** – promoting economic growth and prosperity in the region's urban central cities and a high quality of life for their residents.

## Strategic Goals

While the cross-cutting themes provide the underpinning for the Plan for Progress, it is the 13 strategic goals and their corresponding action steps that will realize the vision.

Each of the 13 strategic goals that make up the core of the Plan relates to one or several of the cross-cutting themes. Some strategic goals carry on work that started with the 1994 Plan for Progress, while others are brand new initiatives that have become the concern of economic development professionals only in recent years.

### Strategic goals of the 2004 Plan for Progress:

- **Attract, retain, and grow** existing businesses and priority clusters
- **Promote** small business and generate flexible risk capital
- **Advocate** efficient regulatory processes at all levels of government
- **Integrate** workforce development and business priorities
- **Improve and enrich** Pre K to 12 education
- **Support** higher education and retain graduates
- **Recruit and train** a new generation of regional leaders
- **Market** our region
- **Revitalize** the Connecticut River
- **Enhance** high-tech and conventional infrastructure
- **Develop** an array of housing options
- **Endorse** a regional approach to public safety
- **Champion** statewide fiscal equity



## ACTION STRATEGIES TO IMPLEMENT THE NEW PLAN

During the early months of 2005, the Plan for Progress Trustees worked on recruiting new leadership for the implementation of the new plan. Lead implementers, strategy boards, and strategy teams were identified and committed to work for each of the new Plan strategic goals. These teams have identified action milestones to implement each recommended strategy as well as to establish metrics for measuring the progress achieved over time.

While most of the strategy teams have completed their lists of action milestones for the upcoming years, there are a handful of strategies that have yet to be activated. These strategy teams will be convened in the fall of 2006.



## **STRATEGY #1: Attract, Retain, and Grow Existing Businesses and Priority Clusters**

### **Lead Implementer**

- Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts

### **Background and Synopsis**

Attracting, retaining, and growing businesses were some of the key accomplishments of the 1994 Plan for Progress. The Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts (EDC) was created by the region's business sector to play a lead role in implementing the Pioneer Valley's economic development strategies, and in marketing the region with the input and influence of the region's largest employers.

Retention of existing industry is a cornerstone of an effective regional economic development program: generally, it requires far less effort and resources to be effective in retaining good-quality jobs than in creating new ones. The Pioneer Valley, however, has several maturing industries that are facing increased national and international competition. The cost and quality of the factors of production, including land, labor, and capital, all affect the profitability of the region's industries and, thus, their ability to remain competitive. Consequently, as the Pioneer Valley is able to expand and enhance the region's business retention program, it will be better able to hold onto businesses and jobs and to contribute positively to the region's overall prosperity.

### **SHORT TERM ACTION MILESTONES (1-2 years)**

1. Encourage the Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts, the New England Economic Development Association, and the Mass Economic Development Council to convene an annual seminar, here in the region, of all economic development professionals, including community development corporations and private developers who are responsible for providing services and support to new and existing businesses. The advanced seminar would be designed to identify best practices and share up-to-date



information about the support services offered by the state and local municipalities.

2. Capitalize on EDC's "Home Field Advantage" program to define the needs and obstacles to growth for businesses in the region. As facts evolve from interviews with regional businesses, convene appropriate parties to enhance the positives and minimize any weaknesses. We would then use this information to help municipalities develop marketing plans that are consistent and compatible with the "Home Field Advantage" program.

### **LONG TERM ACTION MILESTONES (3 years and beyond)**

1. Support and enhance the marketing and retention strategies of EDC and the municipalities.
2. Support the continued evolution of the Regional Technology Corporation, including enhanced technology transfer from the University of Massachusetts.
3. Advance pre-permitted site process throughout the region.
4. Create a "growth tool box" for small local manufacturers, especially in regard to workforce development.

### **Strategy Team Leaders**

Coordinating Council Trustees:

John Gallup, Western Massachusetts EDC

Jeff Hayden, Holyoke Community College

Allan Blair, Western Massachusetts EDC



## **STRATEGY #2:**

## **Promote Small Businesses and Generate Flexible Risk Capital**

### **Lead Implementers**

- Western Massachusetts Small Business Development Center
- Western Massachusetts Enterprise Fund
- Affiliated Chambers of Commerce of Greater Springfield (ACCGS)
- Chambers of Commerce from Hampden, Hampshire, and Franklin counties

### **Background and Synopsis**

Two of every five employees in the Pioneer Valley now work in businesses with fewer than 50 employees. In a region once renowned for its large mills and factories, the emergence of an economy characterized by small businesses is noteworthy. It means that efforts to retain or recruit large businesses to the region cannot be our only approach if the region is to remain economically strong. Small businesses also need to be recruited, supported, and nurtured so that they grow in total revenues and employment.

### **Short Term Action Milestones (1-2 years)**

1. Inventory educational, technical, and financial resources available to assist start-up and small businesses and sustain cross-promotion and collaboration. Secure the required financial resources and develop a website portal for connecting and supporting start-up and small businesses currently operating throughout the Pioneer Valley.
2. Conduct a series of targeted focus groups to determine the unique challenges that confront businesses owned by people of color and women in the Pioneer Valley. Develop ways to showcase and grow this emerging economic force in our market.
3. Develop financial, management, and succession planning programs to ensure the Pioneer Valley's privately held businesses will continue to grow and prosper.

4. Work with the Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts (EDC) and with publicly funded economic development agencies to forge better communications with EDC board members and the region's small businesses and to increase the EDC's advocacy of small businesses.

### **Long Term Action Milestones (3 years and beyond)**

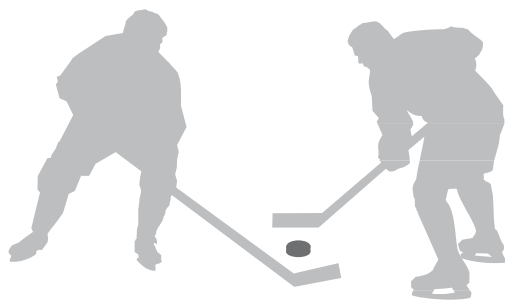
1. Launch a public information and outreach program highlighting the entrepreneurial culture of the Pioneer Valley by promoting the resources available and the diverse and expanding array of small businesses that play a pivotal role in the region's economy.

### **Strategy Team Leaders**

Coordinating Council Trustees:

Dianne Fuller Doherty, WMass Small Business  
Development Center

Stan Kowalski, Western New England College



## **STRATEGY #3: Advocate Efficient Regulatory Processes at All Levels of Government**

### **Lead Implementer**

- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

### **Background and Synopsis**

Community and regional planning is a thoughtful, rational process, characterized by public participation, open dialogue, fact-finding, and adherence to rules and regulations. At times, however, permitting processes and the regulatory environment can stall worthwhile projects.

Development is guided through various boards and regulatory agencies, helping us to prevent unplanned or unsustainable development, to channel dollars and energy into our core cities, and to lead the charge for a progressive and diverse economic base. However, good projects can sometimes struggle to successfully navigate municipal, state, and federal regulations and processes.

Creatively streamlining the regulatory permitting process can meet both our planning goals and the needs of the development community. A fresh vision will stress public participation and discourse, with effective information sharing and technology-based municipal management initiatives. Development that results in an innovative and competitive region begins with an efficient regulatory process.

### **Action Milestones**

This strategy has yet to be activated pending changes in permitting.

### **Strategy Team Leaders**

Coordinating Council Trustees:

Jack Doyle, CPA-Strategic & Financial Consulting

## Strategy #4:

## Integrate Workforce Development and Business Priorities

### Lead Implementers

- Pioneer Valley Community Colleges – Holyoke Community College, Springfield Technical Community College, and Greenfield Community College

### Background and Synopsis

As part of the “Knowledge Corridor,” the Pioneer Valley is home to a network of higher education institutions, public school systems, and vocational schools. The Valley attracts many students from around the country and abroad; unfortunately, too many of our graduates leave the region after completing degrees. The challenges begin even earlier, at the high school and vocational levels, where funding and personnel constraints leave the region’s students without the professional skills necessary to join the workforce.

To be most effective in meeting these challenges, action steps centered on increasing funding, worker training, and links with educators must be complemented by research into the populations that make up our workforce. Why do many of our Latino and African-American children growing up in economically distressed areas not receive the education necessary for gainful employment? How has the MCAS affected vocational and technical schools in our region?

By making a pledge to educate ourselves about our students, workers, and the needs of our business community, we can grow a competent and versatile workforce that remains in the Pioneer Valley.

### Short Term Action Milestones (1-2 years)

1. Compile and distribute the key data sets required to make informed decisions about how to improve and strengthen the Pioneer Valley’s current and future workforce. Correspondingly, use these same data to help pinpoint gaps in the supply and skills of the workforce that must be addressed if our region is to remain economically competitive in a truly global context.

2. From among the region's 10 identified industry clusters, including the Knowledge Corridor, select two (for example, health care and manufacturing) to receive special attention, efforts, and resources in order to boost the number and skill sets of entry level workers needed by these two select industry clusters. Identify and adopt successful initiatives and model programs used elsewhere (such as the National Association of Manufacturers Pilot Program in Kansas City) and seek to maximize the engagement of the region's employers in these focused efforts. Suggested organizations to work on this goal include regional employment boards, career center, cross-border (Massachusetts-Connecticut) collaboration entities, and economic development agencies.
3. Find, profile, and facilitate the replication of innovative employer-based workforce development programs and initiatives that are designed to ensure a steady stream of qualified, trained, and appropriately credentialed workers that can fill the broad spectrum of jobs that collectively comprise and propel the regional economy. Illustrative examples include workforce programs underway at Baystate Health Systems and Western Massachusetts Electric Company, among others. Use such "grow your own workforce" initiatives as pilots to elevate the visibility and number of creative employer-driven workforce development programs across the Pioneer Valley.
4. Organize and solidify support for establishing a working collaboration of the region's three community colleges (HCC, STCC, and GCC). Assuming that this collaboration is realized, it will be used as a means to test and refine a new model for coordinating and integrating the multiplicity of workforce development plans, programs, processes, and providers. Correspondingly, utilize this collaboration as a means to make the workforce development system more accessible, understandable, and user-friendly, and from which to solicit reliable information on the workforce needs of area employers. The participation and collaboration of regional employment boards and career centers will be essential in achieving this milestone.

5. Assuming favorable short term results from the workforce development collaboration, move to institutionalize the region's three community colleges as the key point of coordination for the Pioneer Valley's workforce development system and the lead entity to coordinate and guide workforce development programs and partners to best serve the region's employers, employees, and economy.

### **Long Term Action Milestones (3 years and beyond)**

1. Address how to substantially and permanently reduce the region's growing ranks of "economic dropouts": the sizeable number of potential employees who are blocked or alienated from the world of work, and workforce casualties who are unable to participate in the regional economy. The array of causes is complex and far reaching, including weak language skills, drug and alcohol abuse, lack of educational skills (especially reading, writing, math, and problem solving), and lack of a high school diploma or equivalent.
2. Find practical and productive ways to link the region's workforce development system to the Pioneer Valley Pre K-12 public education system so that the educational system provides the trained and talented workers that employers are constantly seeking. As a component of this undertaking, evaluate the workforce readiness program provided by Pioneer Valley public schools and critically assess their relevance and utility as another tool serving the region's economic development.
3. Establish an ongoing entity to monitor and support workforce development efforts in the region. This entity would have a "cabinet level" status. Those likely to work on this goal include the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, the University of Massachusetts, Holyoke Community College, Springfield Technical Community College, Greenfield Community College, and regional employment boards.

### **Strategy Team Leaders**

Coordinating Council Trustees:

Mary Jenewin-Caplin, Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts

Dr. William Messner, Holyoke Community College

## **STRATEGY #5: Improve and Enrich PreK to 12 Education**

### **Lead Implementers**

- PreK Collaboration for Pioneer Valley

### **Background and Synopsis**

A world-class public school system is the foundation of a competitive, knowledge-based economy. To encourage and aid the Pioneer Valley in its move toward this new economy – one in which knowledge and technology are the primary wealth-creating assets of our community – improving pre-school to 12th-grade education is perhaps our most important and farsighted economic development strategy.

The Pioneer Valley is home to a diverse number of school districts ranging in size, demographics, and characteristics. Because the region's two largest urban school districts (Springfield and Holyoke) educate a very large portion of the region's total student population, high dropout rates and poor MCAS scores in these communities challenge the entire region's economic well-being.

This strategy was divided into two working groups, PreK and K-12. In addition, the PreK committee has crafted a value statement to guide the implementation of their milestones.

### **PreK Committee Value Statement**

The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission's "Improve and Enrich PreK" Committee is committed to policies and programs which foster strong, healthy children and families. We support and encourage investment in all services that promote healthy emotional, social, physical, and cognitive outcomes for children birth through age five and their families, and look forward to working with the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, and other appropriate entities, to achieve those outcomes.



## **Short Term Action Milestones for the PreK Committee (1-2 years)**

1. Conduct a comprehensive mapping and data analysis of providers of early education and care services to assess the Pioneer Valley's capacity to offer universal high quality early education and care.
2. Participate in a statewide study spearheaded by Strategies for Children, Inc. to understand the demand for high-quality early education and care services, including current utilization and preferences.
3. Expand awareness, understanding, and support for the Early Education for All Campaign (EEA). Garner endorsements for the campaign.
4. Participate in activities spearheaded by EEA to make universal high-quality early education and care a highly visible election year issue.
5. Participate in state budget advocacy to expand public investment in universal high-quality early education and care.
6. Participate in legislative advocacy to pass H.4582.

## **Long Term Action Milestones for the PreK Committee (3 years and beyond)**

1. Conduct a comprehensive public education campaign targeting local and regional communities, businesses, families, the early childhood workforce, and others, focused on the benefits of universal high-quality early education.
  - Overall messaging will focus on universal high-quality early education as good for children, families, and the economy.
  - Additional messaging to businesses and other civic organizations will focus on the return yielded by investment in universal high-quality early education.
2. Engage local and regional media to participate in the public education campaign, and to increase support for universal high-quality early education and care.

3. Work with the Legislature to pass appropriate legislation to establish voluntary, universal high-quality early education and care in Massachusetts.
4. Work to expand public investments in universal high-quality early education and care through the annual state budget process.

### **Proposed Short Term Action Milestones for the K-12 Committee (1-2 years)**

1. Convene key leaders—businesses, school committees, school administrators, teachers, parents, and non-profits—in the region through a facilitated dialogue to build consensus around common regional goals and priorities (targeted for fall of 2006). Conceptualize a framework for schools and businesses to share best practices for organizational effectiveness.
2. Develop a campaign and a support program in collaboration with higher education institutions in the region, to attract and retain young people into the K-12 teaching professions and to replace the many teachers who will be retiring in the next 10 to 15 years.
3. Facilitate and coordinate resources providing more professional development for existing teachers with a special emphasis on math, science, special education, and bilingual fields.
4. Inventory the various model K-12 educational programs in the region and support the alignment of existing and developing programs to maximize resources, improve communication across initiatives, and eliminate redundancy in order to ensure the achievement of desired outcomes.
5. Assist in increasing the level of collaboration between businesses and local school districts to improve organizational effectiveness through mentoring, internships, individual coaching, and financial sponsorships to boost student achievement.
6. Advocate for reforms to Massachusetts' school funding formulas to more equitably disperse funds across the state, including to regional school districts, and support legislation and initiatives that ask for increased funding for after school and youth programs.

## **Proposed long Term Action Milestones for the K-12 Committee (3 years and beyond)**

1. Establish and nurture a mutual understanding of economic development and civic goals among business and education sectors that results in a strategic partnership.
2. Identify ways to make better use of the region's unique higher education resources to support the goals of the Plan for Progress K-12 strategy (dual enrollment, after school tutoring and mentoring programs, etc).
3. Advocate for the creation of funding incentives for colleges and universities to attract more students to the field of education and produce more science, math, and special education teachers.

### **Strategy Team Leader for the PreK Committee**

Coordinating Council Trustee:

Mary Walachy, Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation

### **Strategy Team Leader for the K-12 Committee**

Coordinating Council Trustee:

Mike Fritz, Rugg Lumber Co. Inc.



## **STRATEGY #6: Support Higher Education and Retain Graduates**

### **Lead Implementers**

- University of Massachusetts Amherst
- Bay Path College
- Western New England College
- Greenfield Community College
- Hartford Springfield Economic Partnership (InternHere.com)
- Holyoke Community College
- Springfield Technical Community College

### **Background and Synopsis**

According to some estimates, 85 percent of all jobs in the United States will require some form of education beyond high school by the year 2005. This is the reality of the “knowledge economy.” If innovation and creativity is the engine of this economy, higher education is the vehicle. Happily, our region already has significant assets with which to prepare our workforce.

The Plan for Progress calls for the continued strengthening of our region’s higher education institutions, the fostering of greater connections between these public and private institutions and the private sector, and the retention of the graduates of those institutions within the region’s workforce.

### **Short Term Action Milestones (1-2 years)**

1. Host a regional forum that facilitates discussion and collaboration between higher education, business, community leaders, Pioneer Valley elected officials, and state policy makers.
2. Compile demographics and characteristics of graduates from Pioneer Valley higher education institutions, including their geographic location following graduation and the deciding factors for post-graduation decisions, and compile the characteristics of the Pioneer Valley that affect decisions of graduates.

## **Long Term Action Milestones (3 years and beyond)**

1. Establish a formalized Pioneer Valley Higher Education Collaboration that includes public and private institutions of higher education and businesses in the Pioneer Valley.
2. Through the Pioneer Valley Higher Education Collaboration and Plan for Progress, expand political advocacy for increased affordability and accessibility to both public and private institutions of higher education in the Pioneer Valley.
3. Through the Pioneer Valley Higher Education Collaboration and Plan for Progress, advocate for increased financial support for public and private institutions of higher education in the Pioneer Valley with goals of:
  - Restoring public higher education state funding to levels that fully support their missions and secure those institutions as investments for the workforce of the Pioneer Valley.
  - Obtaining ongoing legislative appropriations that significantly increase scholarship funding to ensure that both private and public higher educational opportunities in the Pioneer Valley are available to a broad economic cross section of Massachusetts students.
  - Significantly increasing the number of Pioneer Valley higher education students who participate in internships, work study placements, and summer jobs with Pioneer Valley businesses.
4. Compare and contrast the factors identified by graduates with those factors existing or not existing in the Pioneer Valley and identify any gaps in accuracy.
5. Set benchmarks for measuring progress toward increased retention of graduates in the Pioneer Valley.
6. Establish a set of recommendations regarding the retention of graduates in the Pioneer Valley. These recommendations could include:

- Advertise the exceptional quality of life, diversity, and cultural amenities throughout the region to prospective, arriving, and current undergraduate and graduate students.
  - Develop programs and interventions that build ties between students and the region as early as a prospective student's first visit to campus.
  - Expand existing program that provide student discounts to arts and entertainment events and venues, to foster a greater connection between students and the region.
7. Integrate with other Plan for Progress strategies, particularly those related to the workforce and employers in the Pioneer Valley.

### **Strategy Team Leaders**

Coordinating Council Trustees:

Steven Bradley, Baystate Health System

Martha Field, Greenfield Community College



## **STRATEGY #7: Recruit and Train a New Generation of Regional Leaders**

### **Lead Implementers**

- Springfield and Holyoke Chambers of Commerce
- Leadership Hampshire County
- Northampton Leadership Initiative (Northampton Chamber of Commerce, Hampshire United Way, and Smith College)

### **Background and Synopsis**

Baby boomers, the generation that has led the Pioneer Valley for nearly two decades, are preparing for retirement, and there are fewer people in the generation succeeding them. The Plan for Progress aims to create and support initiatives that recruit and develop a new generation of leaders for the region.

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Plan for Progress strategy “Recruit and train a new generation of regional leaders” is to develop and deliver a collaborative plan of action that meets community leadership needs of the Pioneer Valley.

### **Short Term Action Milestones (1-2 years)**

1. Identify regional leadership programs and relevant resources for young people and adults.
2. Perform a needs assessment process for highly skilled leaders in all sectors—public, private, and civic.
3. Prepare a quantitative and qualitative gap analysis between services provided and expressed needs.
4. Host and sponsor a leadership roundtable with all providers of regional leadership programs.

### **Long Term Action Milestones (3 years and beyond)**

1. Benchmark successful and nationally recognized leadership programs with an emphasis on our region’s particular area of need.

2. Encourage a regional collaboration of prominent institutions with the purpose of creating a regional entity that will manage and access the needs and gaps of leadership criteria identified in our research. Suggested candidates for this collaboration include chambers of commerce, local colleges and universities, economic development agencies, and other organizations that are currently involved in leadership development. A successful union of these parties will result in the creation of a regional leadership organization or an umbrella organization for the existing leadership programs.
3. Facilitate this umbrella organization to develop a collaborative action plan built with tools and techniques both from exemplary models operating elsewhere in the country and from best practices within the Pioneer Valley, which is capable of meeting the leadership needs of the Pioneer Valley on a self-sustaining basis.

### **Strategy Team Leaders**

Coordinating Council Trustees:  
Thomas Herrala, Civic Leader





## **STRATEGY # 8: Market our Region**

### **Lead Implementers**

- Economic Development Council (EDC) of Western Massachusetts
- Hartford-Springfield Economic Partnership
- Chambers of Commerce of Hampden, Hampshire, and Franklin Counties

### **Background and Synopsis**

Tourism is one of the Pioneer Valley's key export industries, bringing substantial dollars, earned elsewhere, into the region's economy. The Pioneer Valley has an extraordinarily diverse array of tourist attractions, events, and destinations that draw people to visit the region to enjoy its cultural, historical, and recreational assets. These range from the Basketball Hall of Fame and Dr. Seuss National Memorial Sculpture Garden; to The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, Downtown Northampton, and the Yankee Candle Company; to the Connecticut River (one of only 14 American Heritage Rivers) and the region's cluster of 14 higher education institutions.

Whether the tourist chooses an urban setting or a beautiful rural landscape, the Pioneer Valley is an extraordinary place where tourist and recreation opportunities abound.

### **Action Milestones**

This strategy is internally focused and will concentrate on how the Plan for Progress will be implemented and how progress can be monitored and measure over time.

### **Strategy Team Leaders**

Coordinating Council Trustees:  
Rus Peotter, WGBY Channel 57  
Hector Bauza, Bauza and Associates



## **STRATEGY # 9: Revitalize the Connecticut River**

### **Lead Implementers**

- Connecticut River Clean-up Committee
- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
- Franklin Regional Council of Governments

### **Background and Synopsis**

In 1998, President Clinton designated the Connecticut River one of the nation's 14 "American Heritage" rivers, highlighting the unique value of this body of water as a recreational resource, a historic transportation thoroughfare, and the foundation of the Pioneer Valley's manufacturing legacy. As New England's longest and largest river, the Connecticut's opportunities and challenges flow across state borders, affecting tourism, economic development, and environmental quality in towns and cities throughout Vermont, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. In Franklin and Hampshire counties, the river is vital to outdoor recreation, drawing tourists and improving the quality of life for the Valley's residents.

The Connecticut River Strategy and the organizations driving it are crucial to restoring the river and highlighting its potential economic benefits. Currently, the Connecticut does not meet Class B (swimmable, fishable) federal water quality standards from Holyoke to the Long Island Sound. A host of other threats exist, from combined sewer outflows (CSOs) discharging untreated waste into the river, to imprudent land use practices that cordon off sections of the river with commercial and residential developments.

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Revitalize the Connecticut River strategy of the Plan for Progress is to restore the river and enhance its recreational, ecological, and economic benefits in a manner that supports environmentally sound hydroelectric generation, manufacturing, and sustainable development.

### **Short Term Action Milestones (1-2 years)**

1. Prepare, file, and seek approval of state legislation that would provide state assistance to support the Connecticut River

Clean-up initiative which is aimed at ultimately achieving fishable, swimmable (Class B) water quality standards.

2. Advocate for the classification of hydro power as a renewable energy source and for continued reliance as well as other forms of renewable energy (such as wind, solar, and biomass).
3. Continue regionwide efforts that are designed to improve, where appropriate, public access to the Connecticut River as well as the creation of active and passive recreation areas and facilities that are linked to the Connecticut River and its tributaries.
4. Create a community-based water quality monitoring system as a pilot program. Use this pilot to measure the effectiveness of a community-based monitoring system.

### **Long Term Action Milestones (3 years and beyond)**

1. Establish a consistent and reliable water quality monitoring system for the Connecticut River in consultation with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and the Connecticut River Watershed Council utilizing community-based water testing techniques carried out by trained volunteers.
2. Advocate and support the Connecticut River Clean-up initiative goal of reducing the water pollution emanating from combined sewer overflows by up to 50 percent by the target year 2009.
3. Champion the implementation of local, regional, and state plans that would increase the number of riverfront parks, where appropriate, and related facilities along the Connecticut River and its tributaries.
4. Amend the 2004 version of The Pioneer Valley Plan for Progress by adding a comprehensive regional energy strategy linked to the region's economy, ecology, and livability.

### **Strategy Team Leaders**

Coordinating Council Trustees:

Christopher Myhrum, Esq., Bulkley, Richardson & Gelinias, LLP

Tim Brennan, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

## **Strategy # 10: Enhance High-Tech and Conventional Infrastructure**

### **Lead Implementers**

- Economic Development Council Infrastructure Committee
- Pioneer Valley Connect Initiative
- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
- Franklin Regional Council of Governments

### **Background and Synopsis**

New types of infrastructure have begun to emerge as critical components of a competitive economy and livable region. Like roads and bridges, telecommunications and technology services provide links between the Pioneer Valley and nearby regions, and between our remotest rural communities and our urban centers. Enhancing all forms of infrastructure –from our roads, buses, sewer lines, and energy services to commercial space, broadband Internet, and cellular technology– will have far-reaching impact on the quality of life for our residents, and on the economic health of our businesses.

### **Short Term Action Milestones (1-2 years)**

1. Regional priority project advocacy:
  - The Economic Development Council will monitor and advocate for critical regional transportation, infrastructure (including biotechnology and telecommunications technologies), and transit projects, and their coordination, timing, funding commitments, and implementation.
  - The Economic Development Council Infrastructure Committee will maintain a current regional priority infrastructure projects list and will monitor the progress of the identified priority projects.
  - The Economic Development Council Government Affairs Committee will advocate for priority project funding with state and federal legislative representatives.

## 2. Priority project infrastructure design funding:

- The Economic Development Council, working through the Government Affairs Committee, will caucus and consult with mayors and selectmen regarding the importance of priority infrastructure project design funding.
- The Economic Development Council will then initiate discussions emphasizing priority project design funding with the regional legislative delegation that will result in legislative action.

### **Long Term Action Milestones (3 years and beyond)**

#### 1. I-91 broadband deployment project:

- The Economic Development Council, Pioneer Valley Connect, and other regional stakeholders will actively participate in the planning and design of the Interstate 91 fiber and conduit project and will work to secure additional funding to ensure that the region's Intelligent Transportation System, security, educational, and economic development needs are met.
- The Economic Development Council Infrastructure Committee, Pioneer Valley Connect, and other regional stakeholders will work closely with Mass Highway to develop public-private partnerships that ensure the successful deployment of the I-91 fiber and conduit project.
- The Economic Development Council Infrastructure Committee will monitor the progress of Pioneer Valley Connect and other regional stakeholders as they work with communication providers to ensure that telecommunications infrastructure expansion meets regional demand.
- The Government Affairs Committee of the Economic Development Council, Pioneer Valley Connect, and other regional stakeholders will work with state legislators to ensure funding for broadband expansion in western Massachusetts.

### **Strategy Team Leaders**

#### Coordinating Council Trustees:

Linda Dunlavy, Franklin Regional Council of Governments  
Paul Tangredi, Environmental Compliance Services, Inc.

## **STRATEGY # 11: Develop an Array of Housing Options**

### **Lead Implementers**

- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

### **Background and Synopsis**

Housing is a basic human need and one of the most significant expenditures individuals face. During the past several years, the Pioneer Valley has experienced a fairly stable housing market, marked by a gradual increase in housing affordability. Despite the general availability and affordability of housing, a disparity still exists between the number of “affordable” housing units (according to existing guidelines) and the number and location of individuals in need of such housing. In order to stave off continued isolation of low-income families and individuals, we must continue to pursue even distribution of affordable and workforce housing throughout the Valley’s urban, suburban, and rural communities.

### **Short Term Action Milestones (1-2 years)**

1. Prepare and publish in 2006 a Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and Franklin Regional Council of Governments Data Digest that would profile the Pioneer Valley’s current housing situation based upon key housing data indices, analyses, and maps. Use this publication as a strategic component of an ongoing public information and educational campaign designed to link Pioneer Valley housing development with its economic development over both the short- and long-term future.
2. In concert with an array of partner organizations, organize and launch a survey effort explicitly targeted at a diversified sample of Pioneer Valley employers which would seek to identify and assess the housing needs and shelter purchasing power of their employees. Use the survey results to pinpoint housing supply, affordability, quality, or other important gaps and deficiencies that require public exposure and resolution.

3. Continue to support and pursue local and regionwide fair housing and financial literacy initiatives and pilot projects that are intended to increase the accessibility to reasonably-priced housing capital (loans) by income-eligible Pioneer Valley residents and households, regardless of their race or ethnicity. Correspondingly, support financial literacy resources, tools, and training that can help economically needy individuals and households to successfully buy and retain homes on a long-term and sustainable basis.
4. Support and assist in documenting efforts of the Old Hill Revitalization Collaborative to revitalize the Old Hill Neighborhood as a replicable model of urban redevelopment in the Pioneer Valley.

### **Long Term Action Milestones (3 years and beyond)**

1. Seek and secure the financial and other resources needed from public and private sources in order to successfully organize and launch the development of a regional housing needs plan and action strategy tailored to the needs and circumstances of the Pioneer Valley and its cities and towns. This multi-year regionwide plan will serve as a means to establish regional housing goals, quantify housing needs, and advance strategies that can increase and preserve the supply of affordable housing units, and support pilot projects in various communities of the Pioneer Valley. We will also work with the state Legislature and governor to develop and adopt housing programs.
2. Seek legislative amendments to the Community Preservation Act (CPA) that would allow participating jurisdictions to pool their CPA housing resources to underwrite regionally-based affordable housing planning, design, and production. Make such activities also “eligible” to receive state matching dollars that emanate from real estate transfer taxes which are currently applicable and collected in all local jurisdictions across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
3. In concert with potential partner organizations such as the Home Builders Association of Western Massachusetts, organize and conduct a series of focus group meetings

with home builders and home building firms that would seek to identify the key economic, regulatory, or other barriers that limit the production of affordable housing units in the Pioneer Valley. Similarly, seek advice and recommendations on how such obstacles could be eliminated or minimized.

4. Attempt to craft an inclusionary housing program for the Pioneer Valley that could be tied to incentives that would facilitate the development of affordable housing units following prescribed inclusionary housing guidelines that would ideally include one or more model ordinances or bylaws. Encourage local governments to also consider tying a variety of incentives to a targeted income or demographic group, thus helping the municipality and the region to meet affordable housing and other pertinent goals.
5. Launch a collaborative effort intended to build and maintain a reliable regionwide inventory of available land and buildings that could potentially be used as sites to create additional diverse and affordably-priced housing units needed across the Pioneer Valley over the next decade or more.

### **Strategy Team Leaders**

Coordinating Council Trustees:

Paul Douglas, Franklin Regional Housing Authority  
Tim Brennan, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission





## Strategy # 12:

## Endorse a Regional Approach to Public Safety

### Lead Implementers

- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

### Background and Synopsis

Our entire region suffers when some of our communities are unsafe and at a high risk for crime. Making sure the Pioneer Valley provides safe places to live and work –and equally important, places that feel safe– is achieved through sound laws and policies coupled with adequate funding, training, and collaboration across jurisdictions. Also, it is necessary to ensure that the region addresses the threat to public safety emanating from terrorism and a variety of natural hazards such as floods, forest fires, and hurricanes.

For more than a decade, Pioneer Valley per capita spending on public safety has fallen far short of state levels. Working with the state to increase overall funding and helping communities find ways to better fund public safety services is critical to addressing crime on a regional level.

Overall, the Plan for Progress seeks to ensure that the Pioneer Valley has a well-coordinated and effective system in place to address and respond to crime, terrorism, and natural disasters. With the formation of the Western Region Homeland Security Council, regional emergency response and collaboration will be enhanced.

### Action Milestones

This strategy has yet to be activated.

### Strategy Team

Coordinating Council Trustees:

Tim Brennan, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

Russell Denver, Esq., Affiliated Chambers of Commerce of  
Greater Springfield

## Strategy # 13:

## Champion Statewide Fiscal Equity

### Lead Implementers

- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

### Background and Synopsis

There are many examples of fiscal imbalance across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, many of which handicap the Pioneer Valley's economic development efforts. The Plan for Progress advocates a consistent and persistent campaign designed to achieve fiscal equity to ensure that Pioneer Valley taxpayers are treated equitably relative to residents living elsewhere in the Commonwealth.

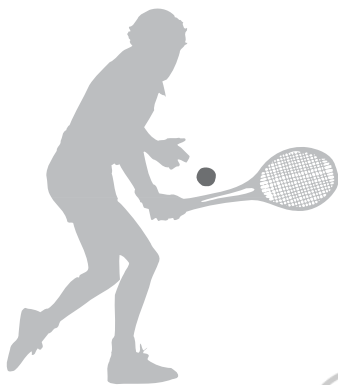
### Action Milestones

This strategy has yet to be activated.

### Strategy Team

Coordinating Council Trustees:

Allan Blair, Economic Development Council of Wmass  
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