

# Top Ten Resolves for 2017

## The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

1. Contribute to the completion of the Massachusetts *State Rail Plan Update* and advocate for the inclusion of 3 projects of interstate significance: expanded passenger rail service on the north-south Knowledge Corridor; phased implementation of an east-west rail link connecting Boston-Worcester-Palmer-Springfield-Hartford-New Haven and Montreal, and; upgrading the Massachusetts segment of the New England Central freight rail corridor to achieve the present-day 286,000 pound weight standard.
  2. Work with the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and other partners to proactively respond to Governor Baker's recently issued Executive Order 569 which lays out a comprehensive strategy that can significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as safeguard Massachusetts residents, municipalities and businesses from the intensifying, adverse effects of climate change.
  3. Utilize state resources provided by the Department of Energy Resources in order to assist eligible PVPC cities and towns to attain state-designation as a "Green Community" as well as to advance clean energy and efficiency projects in previously designated "Green" communities that will reduce energy consumption, save money and sustain the Commonwealth's accelerated transition to a clean energy future.
  4. Seek funding assistance needed to implement several important and time sensitive shared-service projects in 2017 including initiatives designed to reduce the regulatory and cost burdens required in order for cities and towns to comply with federal regulations calling for better management of water quality impacts tied to stormwater as well as mandates to tightly control nitrogen loading at municipal wastewater treatment plants.
  5. Initiate work, in collaboration with state and local officials, to compile and distribute reliable information which can assist those Pioneer Valley communities that choose to proactively address the statewide legalization of recreational marijuana based on the recent affirmative vote in favor of Massachusetts Ballot Question #4.
  6. Provide assistance and technical support needed in 2017 to launch the initial phase of the regional ValleyBike Share Project including municipal commitments, sponsor agreements, vendor recruitment/selection process and required state approval(s) from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation.
  7. Partner with the Commonwealth's Department of Housing and Community Development and assist and support DHCD's efforts to: (a) implement modifications that streamline and improve the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program for eligible communities; (b) refine and finalize state regulations that will afford communities the option of establishing new "Starter Home Zoning Districts," and; (c) support ongoing efforts to eliminate homelessness among adults, families and veterans throughout Massachusetts.
  8. Collaborate with the applicable Regional Planning Agencies across Massachusetts in order to help address priority action items that are agreed to in 2017 by the Commonwealth's Rural Policy Advisory Commission and, in particular, take a lead role in fostering shared services between and among our region's smaller, rural towns.
  9. Support and advance Complete Streets initiatives and projects in cities and towns throughout the Pioneer Valley including the completion of design and engineering plans for PVPC-lead green streets/infrastructure demonstration projects located in downtown Holyoke and Chicopee plus Springfield's "X" neighborhood.
  10. Work with the Congressional delegation in Washington, as well as the Massachusetts Legislature and Governor, to shape and advance legislative initiatives at the federal and state level that can benefit the Pioneer Valley and its residents. At the federal level, for example, support legislation to extend the EPA brownfields program; authorize the Water Resources Development Act, enact a comprehensive House-Senate energy bill, and; to create and advance a major nationwide infrastructure investment package. At the state level, key legislative priorities for 2017-18 include statewide zoning reforms, legislation enabling regional ballot initiatives, transit operating assistance for Regional Transit Authorities including the PVTA, Chapter 90 local roads funding and the release of state environmental bond funds to maintain progress on Connecticut River CSO clean-up projects.
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