



The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission has been selected as the recipient of the 2015 Medium Metro General Achievement Award by the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC). PVPC received the award June 9 at NARC's 49th annual conference and exhibition in Raleigh, NC.

The award recognizes *Our Next Future: An Action Plan for Building a Smart, Sustainable, and Resilient Pioneer Valley*, which was created to chart a course for a more vibrant, competitive, sustainable, and equitable region. The plan identifies place-based strategies to enhance and support the region's vibrant sense of place. It seeks to promote sustainability of the world at large, through reducing our reliance on foreign oil, increasing our energy efficiency, cutting our greenhouse gas emissions, and preventing water and air pollution. The plan is designed to meet the many challenges in the region's growth, development, and economic prosperity.

*Our Next Future* is innovative in the breadth of its content (the plan includes eight distinct element plans: Climate Action and Clean Energy, Food Security, Housing, Environment, Green Infrastructure, Sustainable Transportation, Brownfields, and Land Use), the creativity of its strategies, and the involvement of the private and civic sectors. The civic engagement strategy for *Our Next Future* was designed as a collaborative learning and decision-making process that broadened the range of individuals and communities engaged, with specific emphasis on engaging underrepresented populations, and expanded the definition of sustainability. *Our Next Future* includes a new regionwide Sustainable Pioneer Valley Compact, which enables municipalities, institutions, and businesses alike to endorse the plan and agree to collaborate on its implementation.

*Our Next Future* is the product of a wide-ranging, dedicated partnership among a number of regional entities, including New England's Knowledge Corridor, United Way Hampshire County, United Way Pioneer Valley, University of Massachusetts Amherst Architecture and Design Department, Capitol Region Council of Governments, Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture, The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, and Partnership for Sustainable Communities.

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) serves as the national voice for regionalism by advocating for regional cooperation as the most effective way to address a variety of community planning and development opportunities and issues. In service to this mission, the NARC General Achievement Awards recognize excellence in programs and services of regional councils and metropolitan planning organizations across the United States.

In past years, PVPC has submitted successful NARC annual award nominations for the 2013 State of the People Report (in 2013); for Valley Vision 2, the regional land use plan for the Pioneer Valley region (in 2008); for the Plan for Progress, the region's economic development plan (in 2005); and on behalf of the Massachusetts Association of Regional Councils (MARPA), of which PVPC is a member (in 2004).