

### Goal #3:

## Implement and Enhance the Infrastructure that Connects, Sustains and Ensures the Safety and Resiliency of the Region and its Economy

Without a modern, high quality network of infrastructure, a region cannot sustain economic activity, retain its students and workers, or attract visitors, tourists and investment. The Pioneer Valley's infrastructure includes its transportation, broadband and energy networks; public health and safety resources; housing supply; and natural resources including water supplies, agricultural land and open space/recreational areas. Both local and regional efforts are necessary to ensure consistency, resiliency, and sufficient redundancy to withstand disruptions. The following strategies are meant to achieve these goals:

### Strategy #1: Enhance High-Tech and Conventional Infrastructure

#### Action Steps:

- ❑ Complete build-out of broadband technologies and access to serve all residents, businesses, and institutions. Explore regional approaches as appropriate.
  - Ensure build-out of the “last mile” of the network through public-private partnerships.
  - Foster greater utilization of broadband anchor institutions to promote new innovative uses and better distribution of Internet content.
  - Support universal broadband adoption through digital literacy, public Internet access points, affordable Internet access, and other initiatives
  - Ensure resiliency and redundancy in the broadband system.
- ❑ Support and advocate for expanded service at Bradley International Airport, including direct flights to Europe.
- ❑ Strengthen efforts to increase rail passenger and freight services including:
  - Intercity service along the Knowledge Corridor line including the Amtrak Vermonter service and implementation of expanded shuttle runs along the corridor between Springfield and Greenfield.
  - Commuter rail service connecting New Haven, Hartford and Springfield
  - The Inland Route rail passenger corridor connecting Springfield to Boston and possible connection with Montreal.
  - Rail freight facility upgrades, including ongoing access improvements to the region's primary freight and intermodal yard in West Springfield.



- ❑ Improve transit and intermodal infrastructure, including:
  - Complete rehabilitation of Union Station in Springfield as a regional intermodal transportation hub as well as rail passenger facilities in Holyoke, Northampton and Greenfield.
  - Complete Westfield intermodal transportation facility.
  - Improve bus facilities and infrastructure to improve region-wide transit service and connections with other travel modes.
- ❑ Proactively address the region’s substantial and growing road and bridge repair and improvement needs and the federal, state and local funding required to do so, particularly the I-91 Viaduct Rehabilitation Project.
- ❑ Conduct environmental assessment, cleanup and redevelopment of brownfield sites throughout the region.
- ❑ Increase the region’s energy distribution capacity for a variety of energy sources.
- ❑ Support efforts to increase regional shared transportation programs, such as shared cars and bicycles.
- ❑ Support public and private sector funding to replace the region’s aging underground infrastructure, including water, sewer, electric, and natural gas conduits.
- ❑ Pursue alternative methods of waste management and enhanced recycling.







### Strategy #2: Increase Use of Clean Energy to Reduce Business Costs and Improve the Environment

#### Action Steps:

- ❑ Encourage conservation efforts such as operational efficiencies and demand management as a key to reduce regional energy use.
- ❑ Support continuing transition to clean energy sources, including wind, solar and geothermal.
- ❑ While steadily increasing the generation of affordable clean energy, at the same time take steps to increase the supply of natural gas and the acquisition of hydro-generated electric power from Canada that can keep energy costs affordable to businesses and institutions throughout the Pioneer Valley.
- ❑ Use the city of Holyoke as test bed for innovative energy testing and product development.
- ❑ Link new and existing regionally-based clean energy companies to research and product development assets located in the Pioneer Valley.
- ❑ Encourage participation of the region’s municipalities in state clean energy programs.

### Strategy #3: Enhance Regional Approaches to Public Safety, Public Health and Disaster Resilience

#### Action Steps:

- ❑ Ensure effective collaboration and outreach among agencies and groups addressing public safety, disaster resilience and public health needs.
- ❑ Increase the resilience of the region’s communities to withstand and recover from extreme weather events, public health crises, or all-hazard incidents including acts of domestic and foreign terrorism.
- ❑ Identify and prepare for likely impacts to the region’s critical infrastructure, and prepare residents and businesses for disruptions.
- ❑ Investigate the feasibility of a regional holding facility (lock-up) with state of the practice technology which could allow police officers to return to community patrols.
- ❑ Improve local food production infrastructure (processing, storage, distribution) to provide a reliable and healthful local food supply.





#### **Strategy #4: Develop an Array of Housing Options that Foster Economic Competitiveness**

##### Action Steps:

- ❑ Develop and implement solutions to overcome the challenge of a weak housing market in the urban core and some of the region's other communities.
- ❑ Use Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) potential to create market rate housing opportunities in the region's core cities.
- ❑ Increase and preserve the supply of private income-restricted housing outside of the central cities.
- ❑ Ensure effective collaboration and outreach among agencies and groups which are focused on addressing the region's array of housing needs.
- ❑ Increase homeownership opportunities, including options that are affordable at a range of incomes and physically accessible.
- ❑ Encourage zoning that allows more housing choices such as duplexes, multifamily housing, and accessory apartments as well as regulations that encourage physically accessible housing.
- ❑ Promote outreach and education initiatives centered on Fair Housing laws and their enforcement to landlords, tenants, banking and lending institutions, and the general public.
- ❑ Reduce homelessness through supportive housing, rehousing, and prevention initiatives.
- ❑ Increase homeownership literacy, particularly for first-time homebuyers.

#### **Strategy #5: Revitalize and Protect the Connecticut River and its Watershed**

##### Action Steps:

- ❑ Improve Connecticut River water quality in urban areas by securing continued funding support via MA Environmental Bond and other sources which advance the remediation of combined sewer overflows.
- ❑ Reduce flooding and erosion damage and costs caused by stormwater runoff by utilizing green infrastructure, including green roofs, permeable paving, and on-site stormwater recharge.
- ❑ Reduce and manage natural and man-made debris in and adjacent to rivers through new removal technologies and greater public education.
- ❑ Enhance regional tourism and recreation resources by increasing and enhancing public access points, including boat launches, parks, riverwalks, and trails.
- ❑ Preserve prime farm land for active agriculture use as a means to preserve the local agricultural economy.
- ❑ Preserve open space in environmentally sensitive and scenic areas in order to maintain habitat, conserve resources and enhance the region's living environment.

##### Implementation Team for Goal #3:

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission\*  
Franklin Regional Council of Governments\*  
Connecticut River Clean-up Committee  
WMA Connect/MBI  
Valley Development Council  
Pioneer Valley Regional Housing Advisory Committee

\*Potential lead implementer

