

The Pioneer Valley Plan for Progress

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

CEDS

2014 | Ten Year Update



Prepared by
Pioneer Valley
Planning Commission
September 2014

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
and Economic Development District

The Pioneer Valley Plan for Progress

*The Region's Comprehensive
Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)*

2014Ten-Year Update

Prepared by

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Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
AN ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS	7
A SNAPSHOT OF THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION	7
THE STATE OF THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION	8
<i>The People</i>	8
<i>The Economy</i>	33
<i>The Infrastructure</i>	46
<i>Political Infrastructure</i>	57
ASSESSMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONDITIONS	61
<i>Weaknesses & External Threats</i>	61
<i>Competitive Advantages</i>	62
<i>Analysis of the Region's Economic Clusters</i>	65
<i>Availability of Partners and Resources for Economic Development</i>	72
A VISION FOR THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION	74
THE NEW 2014 PLAN FOR PROGRESS	74
2014 PLAN FOR PROGRESS – BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	75
2014 PLAN FOR PROGRESS GOALS	75
INTEGRATION WITH OTHER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS	79
<i>Choosing to Compete in the 21st Century: An Economic Development Policy and Strategic Plan for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts</i>	79
<i>Our Region, Our Future: A Plan for a Connected-Competitive-Vibrant-Green Knowledge Corridor Region</i>	80
<i>Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts: Strategic Goals 2013</i>	81
<i>Pioneer Valley Growth Business Study</i>	82
<i>Massachusetts Broadband Institute – Closing the Digital Divide: Broadband Infrastructure, Adoption and Digital Inclusion in Massachusetts</i>	82
<i>Innovation-Based Economic Development Strategy for Holyoke and the Pioneer Valley Region</i>	84
<i>Rebuild Springfield Plan</i>	85
<i>Greater Franklin County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)</i>	86
<i>Regional Employment Boards</i>	87
<i>Other Plans</i>	88
PLAN FOR PROGRESS MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2004-2014	89
STRATEGY UPDATES	89
<i>Strategy #1: Attract, Retain, and Grow Existing Businesses and Priority Clusters</i>	89
<i>Strategy #2: Promote Small Businesses and Generate Flexible Risk Capital</i>	95
<i>Strategy #4: Integrate Workforce Development and Business Priorities</i>	101
<i>Strategy #5a: Advance and Enrich Early Education at State and Regional Levels</i>	104
<i>Strategy #5b: Improve and Enrich K to 12 Education</i>	107
<i>Strategy #6: Support Higher Education and Retain Graduates</i>	109
<i>Strategy #7: Recruit and Train a New Generation of Regional Leaders</i>	111
<i>Strategy #8: Market our Region</i>	113
<i>Strategy #9: Revitalize the Connecticut River</i>	116
<i>Strategy #10: Enhance High-Tech and Conventional Infrastructure</i>	118
<i>Strategy #11: Develop an Array of Housing Options</i>	122
<i>Strategy #12: Endorse a Regional Approach to Public Safety</i>	124
<i>Strategy #13: Champion Statewide Fiscal Equity</i>	126
<i>Strategy #14: Develop A Green Regional Economy</i>	128

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<i>Strategy #15: Innovation-Based Economic Development Strategy for Holyoke and the Pioneer Valley Region.....</i>	<i>131</i>
2014 CEDS PROJECTS.....	133
<i>The Project Proposal Process.....</i>	<i>133</i>
<i>Summary of Project Proposals.....</i>	<i>134</i>
<i>1) Regional High Priority Projects in Locations Meeting EDA Distress Criteria:</i>	<i>135</i>
<i>2) Regional High Priority Projects Intended to Serve Areas Meeting EDA Economic Distress Criteria:.....</i>	<i>137</i>
AN EVALUATION OF OUR PERFORMANCE	142
MOUS WITH STRATEGY TEAM LEAD IMPLEMENTERS	142
STRATEGY ACCOMPLISHMENTS	143
PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	143
<i>Summary</i>	<i>143</i>
<i>Rating Scale</i>	<i>144</i>
<i>Regional Geography.....</i>	<i>144</i>
<i>How are we doing? Reviewing Indicator Trends.....</i>	<i>144</i>
SUMMARY OF PLAN FOR PROGRESS PERFORMANCE INDICATORS BY STRATEGY GROUPING	147
<i>Strategy Grouping I: Strengthen & Expand the Region's Economic Base.....</i>	<i>147</i>
<i>Strategy Grouping II: Foster Means of Regional Competitiveness.....</i>	<i>149</i>
<i>Strategy Grouping III: Supply the Region with an Educated, Skilled, and Adequately Sized Pool of Workers.....</i>	<i>150</i>
<i>Strategy Grouping IV: Foster the Region's Business Climate and Prospects for Sustainable Growth</i>	<i>154</i>
<i>Urban Core Data</i>	<i>157</i>
APPENDIX A: PROJECT PROPOSALS BY INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITIES	160
APPENDIX B: PLAN FOR PROGRESS COORDINATING COUNCIL, TRUSTEES, AND STRATEGY TEAM MEMBERSHIPS	194
PLAN FOR PROGRESS COORDINATING COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP JUNE 2014	195
PLAN FOR PROGRESS TRUSTEES MEMBERSHIP - JUNE 2014	197

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: PERCENT CHANGE IN POPULATION (2002-2012)	8
FIGURE 2: PIONEER VALLEY REGION POPULATION CHANGES BY RACE AND ETHNICITY	11
FIGURE 3: POPULATION BY AGE IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION	12
FIGURE 4: NET DOMESTIC MIGRATION IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION	13
FIGURE 5: FOREIGN BORN PERSONS BY YEAR OF ENTRY IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION.....	14
FIGURE 6: 2012 POVERTY RATES FOR ALL PERSONS AND FOREIGN BORN PERSONS BY CITIZENSHIP STATUS	15
FIGURE 7: PER CAPITA INCOME (ADJUSTED TO 2012 \$)	17
FIGURE 8: MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME (2012)	20
FIGURE 9: POVERTY RATE IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION, 2002-2012	21
FIGURE 10: CHILD POVERTY RATE IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION, 2002-2012	22
FIGURE 11: FAMILIES IN POVERTY (2012)	24
FIGURE 12: COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY GRADUATES	31
FIGURE 13: UNEMPLOYMENT RATES.....	34
FIGURE 14: PIONEER VALLEY REGION LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT WITH TREND LINES.....	35
FIGURE 15: NEW UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE CLAIMS, 2003 TO 2013	36
FIGURE 16: EMPLOYMENT IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION BY MAJOR INDUSTRY, 2007 AND 2012	37
FIGURE 17: CHANGE IN PIONEER VALLEY REGION EMPLOYMENT BY MAJOR INDUSTRY, 2007 TO 2012.....	38
FIGURE 18: AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES BY INDUSTRY IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION, 2012.....	39
FIGURE 19: UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY WORKER'S PLACE OF RESIDENCE, 2012.....	41
FIGURE 20: LABOR FORCE BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE, 2012	42
FIGURE 21: NUMBERS OF EMPLOYERS BY SIZE IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION, 2006 AND 2011	43
FIGURE 22: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND SINGLE-FAMILY HOME PRICES IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION, 2002-2012	47
FIGURE 23: MEDIAN SALE PRICE OF SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION (2013).....	48
FIGURE 24: PIONEER VALLEY REGION HOUSING AFFORDABILITY RATIO (MEDIAN PRICE/MEDIAN INCOME), 2002-2012	49
FIGURE 25: PIONEER VALLEY TRANSIT AUTHORITY SYSTEM WIDE ANNUAL BUS AND VAN TRIPS 2002- 2012	52
FIGURE 26: PIONEER VALLEY REGION STATE REPRESENTATIVES AND DISTRICTS.....	58
FIGURE 27: PIONEER VALLEY REGION STATE SENATORS AND DISTRICTS	59
FIGURE 28: PIONEER VALLEY REGION CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS & SENATE CONTACTS.....	60
FIGURE 29: PIONEER VALLEY PLAN FOR PROGRESS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART	73

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1: CHANGES IN TOTAL POPULATION OF THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION (1990 - 2012)	9
TABLE 2: HISPANIC OR LATINO POPULATION IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION 2000-2012	10
TABLE 3: POPULATION BY RACE 2012	10
TABLE 4: CHANGES IN PER CAPITA INCOME	18
TABLE 5: CHANGES IN MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION - 2000 TO 2012.....	19
TABLE 6: CHANGES IN COMMUNITY POVERTY RATES 2000 TO 2012	23
TABLE 7: PIONEER VALLEY REGION SCHOOL DISTRICTS PROFILE	26
TABLE 8: ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT RATE IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION - 2004 - 2013.....	28
TABLE 9: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION - 2000 AND 2012	30
TABLE 10: NUMBER OF COLLEGE GRADUATES FROM THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION'S HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS	32
TABLE 11: PIONEER VALLEY REGION'S TOP 10 EMPLOYMENT CENTERS FOR 2012	40
TABLE 12: MAJOR EMPLOYERS IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION IN 2013	44
TABLE 13: DRIVING DISTANCES AND TIMES FROM SPRINGFIELD TO SELECT URBAN CENTERS	50
TABLE 14: MAJOR INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS SERVING THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION.....	50
TABLE 15: PIONEER VALLEY REGION AVERAGE COMMUTE TIMES TO WORK	51
TABLE 16: SUMMARY OF EDA PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT PROPOSALS FOR THE 2014 CEDS ANNUAL UPDATE	140

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



New University of Massachusetts Life Science Laboratories, Amherst
Photo: Ed Cohen

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

The Pioneer Valley region was designated an Economic Development District in 1999 by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration. In keeping with this designation, the region prepares a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) that is updated annually, providing a means for regional collaboration to define and

advance key economic interests of the region and its people. The CEDS features a description of regional economic conditions, including demographics, geography, regional assets, employment, and education data, and sets forth goals and objectives for the future. The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), which administers this process, is the designated regional planning agency for the Pioneer Valley region, which includes 43 cities and towns comprising the Hampshire and Hampden county areas in western Massachusetts. In this capacity, the PVPC strives to foster a proactive regional planning process that will help create jobs, support a stable and diversified regional economy, and improve living conditions and prosperity for residents throughout the region.

The Plan for Progress

The Pioneer Valley Plan for Progress is a 10-year blueprint for economic development in the region, crafted by the combined efforts of the region's public, private, and civic sectors. It contains a compilation of economic strategies, supported and advanced by a growing network of leaders from across the region, developed through research and business community participation. These strategies are then incorporated into the CEDS and progress is updated annually. The last version of the Plan for Progress was developed in 2004, and a new 10-year update is under way for release in the fall of 2014.

CEDS 10-Year Update

This 2014 CEDS Ten-Year Update will give the region's leadership a current picture of the status of the region's economy and a broad outline of the new Plan for Progress economic strategies. The update analyzes significant economic changes since 2004, as described in detail in the "Analysis of Regional Economic Conditions." It sets forth goals and objectives for the upcoming decade and provides an evaluation of performance over the past ten years, using data indicators and a summary of accomplishments. The CEDS primarily

includes data from what is called the “Pioneer Valley region,” the 43 cities and towns within the Hampshire and Hampden county areas. However, the Plan for Progress strategies incorporate the Franklin county area, and for certain aspects, the entire Knowledge Corridor.

Regional Economic Trends 2004-2014

The most significant economic event of the last ten years was the “Great Recession” of 2007-2009, which dramatically slowed or in some cases halted growth, resulting in skyrocketing unemployment rates and deepening poverty, particularly in the urban core areas of the region. The effects of the recession began in 2008, peaked in 2010, and have only slowly abated over the past several years. The unemployment rate was highest at 9.7 percent for the region and 12.3 percent for the urban core in 2010. It has still not returned to pre-recession levels which were in the 5-6 percent range. Furthermore, the poverty rate has climbed from a low of 11.8 percent in 2001 to 16 percent in 2011, the highest in over a decade. This rate continues to follow a recent pattern of exceeding Massachusetts’ overall poverty rate by several percentage points.

Another impact of the recession, compounding the loss of jobs, was the dramatic housing market crash. Values dropped precipitously, and many homeowners found themselves “under water,” with their mortgages exceeding the value of their homes. Worse yet, many homebuyers had entered into subprime mortgages with adjustable rates that quickly become unaffordable, and foreclosure rates soared. Foreclosures have abated since the height of the recession, but continue to be a problem in the region, especially the urban core areas. In the past couple of years, the housing market is showing signs of recovery, as prices and sales slowly rise.

Just as the height of the recession had passed, the Pioneer Valley region suffered from a series of natural disasters in 2011, including an EF-3 tornado in June, Hurricane Irene in August, and the snowstorm of October 29-30, all of which caused widespread damage and resulted in federal disaster declarations. Particularly in the tornado path, rebuilding efforts are ongoing as state and federal assistance continues to be deployed to these areas. The South End of Springfield was particularly hard hit and many properties remain vacant after damaged buildings were removed. An MGM proposal to build a casino in that location has raised both hopes and fears in the region.

Some aspects of the economy suffered setbacks during the recession but have been slowly recovering, for an overall improvement over the ten-year period. The private sector payroll in the Pioneer Valley increased from \$8.3 billion in 2005 to over \$9.5 billion in 2012, an increase of 15%. The total number of business establishments has also grown by over 1,800 during that period. And as a 2013 Pioneer Valley Growth Business Study demonstrated, 80 percent of small to medium-sized firms in the region had stable job growth from 2005 to 2010, showing resiliency in the face of significant odds.

The region also shows some promise in the development of talent and workforce, even while a shortage of workers looms due to expected baby boomer retirements. Since 2004 there has been a notable decrease in the high school dropout rate, in nearly all school districts, and an overall increase in level of education achieved by Pioneer Valley residents. Since 2004, the dropout rate for the region has decreased from 5.6% to 3.2%. Even in the urban core, the cities of Springfield, Holyoke, and Chicopee, dropout rates fell by about two percentage points in each case. At the same time, the percentage of the population

achieving a high school diploma, Associate's Degree, Bachelor's Degree, and/or graduate or professional degree has increased throughout the Pioneer Valley region. The number of graduates from 2- and 4-year colleges and universities in most cases has shown increases in the hundreds of students. Only a few of the small liberal arts colleges have kept enrollment at fairly steady levels. The challenge, then, is to keep these graduates in the region.

Finally, over the past ten years, in a similar manner to the last several decades, the economy has continued to transition from a large manufacturing sector to a smaller, more specialized manufacturing cluster and an expanding service industry, including educational and healthcare services. Although growth slowed significantly during the recession, the fastest growing sectors over the past ten years have been health care and social assistance; public administration; utilities; and a wide-ranging "other services" sector that includes personal, household, automobile and social services.

The Pioneer Valley's Competitive Advantages

Despite the extended recession and the ongoing challenges of developing talent for the region's strongest industries, the Pioneer Valley region has many competitive advantages which support growth and innovation in the economy. Several have been strengthened over the past ten years through strenuous efforts by regional leaders, legislators, and municipalities:

- 1) A history and ongoing practice of innovation and pioneering technologies, now showing further promise with hydroelectric power operating the Green High Performance Computing Center, the John W. Olver zero-net energy transit center in Greenfield, and cutting-edge life sciences research taking place at UMass and the Pioneer Valley Life Sciences Institute.
- 2) A strategic and highly accessible location at the crossroads of New England that is being enhanced by major passenger and freight rail improvements.
- 3) A center of education excellence, with one of the most skilled and highly educated workforces in the world, now improved by additional campuses in downtown Springfield for Cambridge College and the University of Massachusetts.
- 4) Tremendous levels of collaboration between the regional employment boards and community colleges, with significant workforce training efforts under way tailored to meet the future needs of the region.
- 5) A telecommunications hub for New England, now with much greater broadband access in all areas of the region.
- 6) Increased recreational opportunities, with cleaner Connecticut River water, more bike paths and greenways, and greater riverfront access.
- 7) An evolving Hartford-Springfield economic partnership that has spawned the Knowledge Corridor, InternHere.com program, Sustainable Communities Initiative and a new Talent Development Strategy.

- 8) Continued upgrading of the already superior medical facilities, with new, state-of-the-art patient care facilities at major hospitals and increased care availability at community health centers.

Accomplishments of the 2004 Plan for Progress

Over the past ten years, significant progress has been made towards the goals laid out in 2004, enhancing the region's economy and quality of life. Some brief highlights (discussed in more detail later in this report) of the period's accomplishments and successes include:

- **The Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center (MGHPCC)** opened in the Holyoke Innovation District in 2012. The \$165 million facility is a partnership of Harvard, MIT, Boston University, UMass and Northeastern University as well as Cisco, EMC, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Center is facilitating high-level scientific research and is a catalyst for the new Innovation District.
- **Springfield was chosen by the National Civic League as one of 14 of their 2012 All-America Cities**, out of more than 100 U.S. cities that applied for the designation. Springfield won the honor for its work with *Reading Success by 4th Grade*, an initiative of the Davis Foundation, to have 80% of city students reading at a proficient level by 2016.
- **Ludlow Mills is now the site of the new HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital of Western Massachusetts**, with an improved, state-of-the-art facility to replace the original hospital.
- **Common Capital**, a non-profit financing and business assistance organization, **has expanded its business assistance program and increased its lending capacity, which now exceeds \$5 million.** Common Capital also launched the Community First Fund in 2013, a vehicle for individuals to safely invest in the local economy.
- **1,200 miles of high-speed fiber optic lines** have been deployed in previously unserved and underserved areas of western MA, and efforts to achieve full access are under way by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute. Currently, over 1,000 schools, libraries and municipal buildings are directly served by the new network.
- **Leadership Pioneer Valley**, the region's new comprehensive, advanced leadership program, **has now graduated three classes, for a total of 114 alumni.** The program is achieving its mission to identify, develop, and connect diverse leaders to strengthen the Pioneer Valley.
- **Baystate Medical Center's new "Hospital of the Future"** was completed in 2012. Now called the MassMutual Wing, the 640,000-square-foot facility contains the Davis Family Heart and Vascular Center and the D'Amour Family Healing Garden, as well as a new 70,000-square-foot emergency department.

- **The Business Growth Center at Springfield Technology Park has expanded its services and impact significantly** over the past ten years – it is nearly filled to capacity with tenants, provides regular business assistance forums, and is a founding member of the Association of Cleantech Incubators of New England.
- **The University of Massachusetts/Amherst established a satellite campus in downtown Springfield** in the spring of 2014. UMass opened a welcome center at its new downtown satellite center in Tower Square and began registering prospective students for courses and degree programs for the fall of 2014.
- The City of Northampton and MassDevelopment, the recipients of \$750,000 in 2008 EDA Public Works funds, are **nearing buildout of Village Hill Northampton**, a 126-acre mixed use site.
- **The Regional Employment Boards and Community Colleges have collaborated on numerous major workforce initiatives:** BayStateWorks programs, Pathways Out of Poverty, Healthcare Workforce Partnership, Precision Manufacturing Regional Alliance Project, Middle Skills Manufacturing Initiative, Financial and Business Services Workforce Collaborative, Massachusetts Workforce Competitive Trust fund grants, and the Training and Workforce Options initiative.
- Over the past decade, **the annual volume of untreated combined sewer overflow (CSO) discharged to the Connecticut** and other western Massachusetts tributary rivers **has been reduced by 1 billion gallons per year.**
- **InternHere.com was successfully launched** in 2005. A project of the Hartford-Springfield Economic Partnership, the program is a web-based system that connects employers with prospective interns at high schools and colleges in the Knowledge Corridor region.
- In response to the successful life sciences industry sector already existing in our region, **life sciences grants totaling over \$109 million** were awarded to educational and research entities in the region by the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center.
- **The new MassMutual Convention Center was completed** in 2005, and the region has aggressively pursued the “meetings and conventions” market, with outreach and the www.springfield-first.com website.

Optimism for the Future – 2014-2024

These successes are just a small sampling of the progress that has been made in the region over the past ten years; many more are described in the “Accomplishments” section of this report. This CEDS Ten-Year Update has been developed to serve as a working document used by both the private and public sectors, to prompt thought and discussion about the region’s economy and to motivate participation in the planning and implementation process. As we progress through the 21st century, economic growth and health for the Pioneer Valley region will increasingly depend on building and expanding the private-public partnerships that started this process twenty years ago.

AN ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS



Boulevard Machine and Gear, Inc., Springfield
Photo: Ed Cohen

A Snapshot of the Pioneer Valley Region

Located in the midwestern section of Massachusetts and covering 1,179 square miles, the Pioneer Valley region and Economic Development District (EDD) encompasses the fourth largest metropolitan area in New England. The region is bisected by the Connecticut River and is bounded to the north by Franklin County, to the south by the state of Connecticut, to the east by the Quabbin Reservoir and Worcester

County, and to the west by Berkshire County. The Pioneer Valley region, which constitutes the 43 cities and towns within the Hampshire and Hampden county areas, is home to about 625,718 people and the urbanized areas of Springfield, Chicopee, and Holyoke.

Springfield, the third largest city in Massachusetts, is the region's cultural and economic center. Springfield is home to several of the region's largest employers, including Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company, Baystate Health, Mercy Medical Center, and Solutia, Inc., a subsidiary of Eastman Chemical. Major cultural institutions include the Springfield Symphony, City Stage, the Mass Mutual Convention Center, Quadrangle Museums, the Basketball Hall of Fame, and the Dr. Seuss National Memorial Sculpture Garden.

The cities of Chicopee and Holyoke were the first planned industrial communities in the nation. Merchants built an elaborate complex of mills, workers' housing, dams, and canal systems that evolved into cities. While many of the historic mills and industries are now gone, a number of 19th and 20th century structures are maintained and improved through municipal preservation and revitalization initiatives.

Unique within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Pioneer Valley region contains a diverse economic base, internationally known educational institutions, and limitless scenic beauty. Dominant physical characteristics include the broad fertile agricultural valley formed by the Connecticut River, the Holyoke Mountain range that traverses the region from Southwick to Pelham, and the foothills of the Berkshire Mountains. Prime agricultural land, significant wetlands, and scenic rivers are some of the region's premier natural resources. Choices in life-style range from contemporary downtown living to stately historic homes, characteristic suburban neighborhoods, and rural living in very small communities—a variety that contributes to the diversity and appeal of the region. The unique combination of natural beauty, cultural amenities, and historical character make the Pioneer Valley region an exceptional environment in which to live, work, and play.

The State of the Pioneer Valley Region

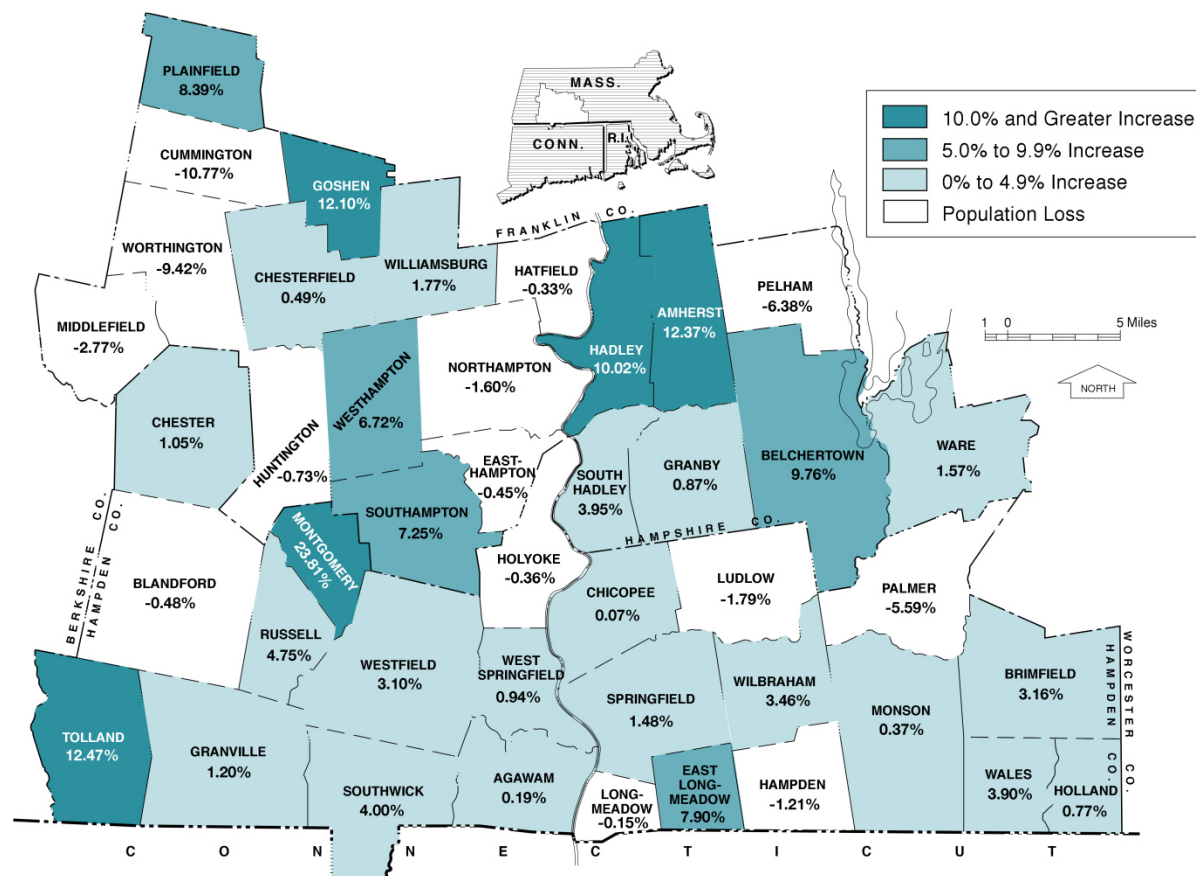
The People

Changes in Population

During the 1990s and early 2000s, the population of the Pioneer Valley region grew modestly. Unlike widely publicized cases of urban renewal in cities such as Chicago, the region's most urbanized areas either remained stable or lost population, while numbers rose mainly in the outlying rural communities.

According to recent U.S. Census estimates, the region's population increased by just 1.9% between 2002 and 2012. Of that limited growth, a small amount occurred in the urban areas: Collectively, the population of Agawam, Chicopee, Holyoke, Springfield, Westfield, and West Springfield grew just over 1 percent between 2002 and 2012 and nearly a quarter of that growth occurred in Westfield alone. This departs only slightly from the trend during the 1990s when the region's three largest cities — Springfield, Chicopee, and Holyoke — all experienced population declines. There was some shift in this trend between 2002 and 2012, as all three cities experienced either stable population or slight growth instead of decline. At the same time, the last decade has seen Westfield surpass Holyoke as the city with the third largest population in the region.

Figure 1: Percent Change in Population (2002-2012)



Data Source: U. S. Census Bureau Population Estimates Program, 2002-2012

Table 1: Changes in Total Population of the Pioneer Valley Region (1990 - 2012)

	1990	2002	2012	Avg. Annual Change 1990-2002	Avg. Annual Change 2002-2012
United States	248,709,873	287,803,914	313,914,040	15.7%	9.1%
Massachusetts	6,016,425	6,440,978	6,646,144	7.1%	3.2%
Pioneer Valley Region	602,878	613,859	625,718	1.8%	1.9%
Hampden County	456,310	460,848	465,923	1.0%	1.1%
Hampshire County	146,568	153,011	159,795	4.4%	4.4%
Agawam	27,323	28,555	28,608	4.5%	0.2%
Amherst	35,228	34,721	39,016	-1.4%	12.4%
Belchertown	10,579	13,410	14,719	26.8%	9.8%
Blandford	1,187	1,246	1,240	5.0%	-0.5%
Brimfield	3,001	3,548	3,660	18.2%	3.2%
Chester	1,280	1,337	1,351	4.5%	1.0%
Chesterfield	1,048	1,229	1,235	17.3%	0.5%
Chicopee	56,632	55,449	55,490	-2.1%	0.1%
Cummington	785	975	870	24.2%	-10.8%
East Longmeadow	13,367	14,732	15,896	10.2%	7.9%
Easthampton	15,537	16,079	16,007	3.5%	-0.4%
Goshen	830	942	1,056	13.5%	12.1%
Granby	5,565	6,228	6,282	11.9%	0.9%
Granville	1,403	1,586	1,605	13.0%	1.2%
Hadley	4,231	4,790	5,270	13.2%	10.0%
Hampden	4,709	5,219	5,156	10.8%	-1.2%
Hatfield	3,184	3,286	3,275	3.2%	-0.3%
Holland	2,185	2,468	2,487	13.0%	0.8%
Holyoke	43,704	40,279	40,135	-7.8%	-0.4%
Huntington	1,987	2,188	2,172	10.1%	-0.7%
Longmeadow	15,467	15,858	15,835	2.5%	-0.1%
Ludlow	18,820	21,582	21,195	14.7%	-1.8%
Middlefield	392	542	527	38.3%	-2.8%
Monson	7,776	8,647	8,679	11.2%	0.4%
Montgomery	759	693	858	-8.7%	23.8%
Northampton	29,289	29,058	28,592	-0.8%	-1.6%
Palmer	12,054	12,872	12,152	6.8%	-5.6%
Pelham	1,373	1,411	1,321	2.8%	-6.4%
Plainfield	571	596	646	4.4%	8.4%
Russell	1,594	1,707	1,788	7.1%	4.7%
South Hadley	16,685	17,098	17,773	2.5%	3.9%
Southampton	4,478	5,531	5,932	23.5%	7.3%
Southwick	7,667	9,207	9,575	20.1%	4.0%
Springfield	156,983	151,314	153,552	-3.6%	1.5%
Tolland	289	433	487	49.8%	12.5%
Wales	1,566	1,794	1,864	14.6%	3.9%
Ware	9,808	9,707	9,859	-1.0%	1.6%
West Springfield	27,537	28,309	28,574	2.8%	0.9%
Westfield	38,372	40,156	41,399	4.6%	3.1%
Westhampton	1,327	1,502	1,603	13.2%	6.7%
Wilbraham	12,635	13,857	14,337	9.7%	3.5%
Williamsburg	2,515	2,433	2,476	-3.3%	1.8%
Worthington	1,156	1,285	1,164	11.2%	-9.4%

Source: U. S. Decennial Census, 1990-2012

Table 2: Hispanic or Latino Population in the Pioneer Valley Region 2000-2012

	Hispanic or Latino Persons			% of Total Population		
	2000	2012	% Change	2000	2012	% Change
Pioneer Valley Region	74,409	110,301	48.2%	12.2%	17.6%	5.4%
Hampden County	69,197	102,369	47.9%	15.2%	22.0%	6.8%
Hampshire County	5,212	7,932	52.2%	3.4%	5.0%	1.6%
Massachusetts	428,729	673,885	57.2%	6.8%	10.1%	3.3%
United States	35,305,818	52,961,017	50.0%	12.5%	16.9%	4.4%

Sources: U. S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census and 2012 ACS 1-Year Estimates

Table 3: Population by Race 2012

	White	African American	Native American	Asian	Pacific Islander	Other Races
Pioneer Valley Region	81.3%	7.0%	0.3%	2.8%	0.0%	8.6%
Hampden County	78.4%	8.6%	0.3%	2.2%	0.0%	10.5%
Hampshire County	89.8%	2.6%	0.1%	4.4%	0.2%	2.9%
Massachusetts	80.1%	7.1%	0.2%	5.7%	0.0%	6.8%
United States	73.9%	12.6%	0.8%	5.0%	0.2%	7.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 1-Year County Population Estimates.

Percentages add up to more than 100% because of ability to report more than one racial category. Because the U.S. Census Bureau considers Hispanic/Latino an ethnic category rather than a race category, all race categories include some people who are Hispanic or Latino and some who are not.

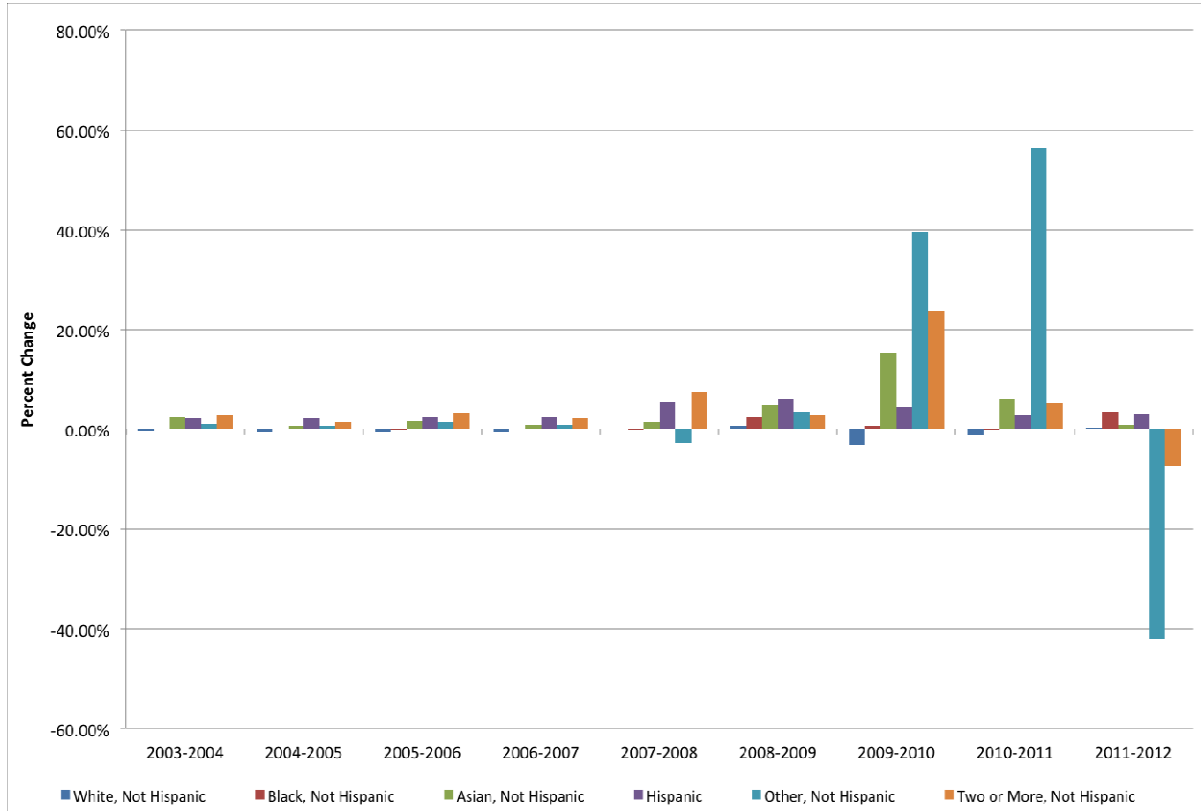
While the population in the urban core remained stable in the past decade, with some growth in Westfield, the suburban and rural communities experienced growth. Figure 1 depicts the pattern of population growth and decline between 2002 and 2012. The areas of greatest proportions of growth are generally outside the most urbanized, and even suburban, parts of the region. Rural communities, such as Montgomery, Goshen, Tolland, Belchertown, and Plainfield experienced significant population growth in that time period.

During the 1990s, the northern urban areas of Northampton and Amherst experienced a population decline, while the more rural communities around them grew. While between 2002 and 2012 Amherst's population climbed back to well beyond its 1990 level, the general pattern of large proportional increases happening in smaller towns continued, with Hadley growing by 10.0 percent.

Continuing an established trend, the region's Hispanic and Latino population grew by 48.2% between 2000 and 2012, a rate of growth that was significant, though slightly lower than that of both the state and nation (see Table 2). While the rate of growth in the Hispanic and Latino population has been slightly slower than that of the state, at approximately 17% of the total population, the Hispanic and Latino population is actually slightly higher than that of the nation. In this sense, the Pioneer Valley region looks less like the rest of the state as a whole and more like nation-wide demographics. Conversely, the proportion of the Pioneer Valley region population identifying exclusively as White (81.3%) is closer to that of the state (80.1%) than to the nation (73.9 percent). (See Table 3.)

While the proportion of people who identify as White in the Pioneer Valley region is now slightly higher than that of Massachusetts as a whole, the breakdown of people who identified as races other than White were varied somewhat. The Pioneer Valley region was nearly identical to the state in the proportion of people who identify as African Americans, Native Americans, or Pacific Islander, 3% lower in the proportion of people who identify as an Asian race and 1.8% higher in the proportion of people who consider themselves a race other than the main five classifications recognized by the U.S. Census Bureau. Conversely, in 2012, those who identify as Asian accounted for 5.7% of the state's population, but they made up only 2.8% of the population of the Pioneer Valley region.

Figure 2: Pioneer Valley Region Population Changes by Race and Ethnicity

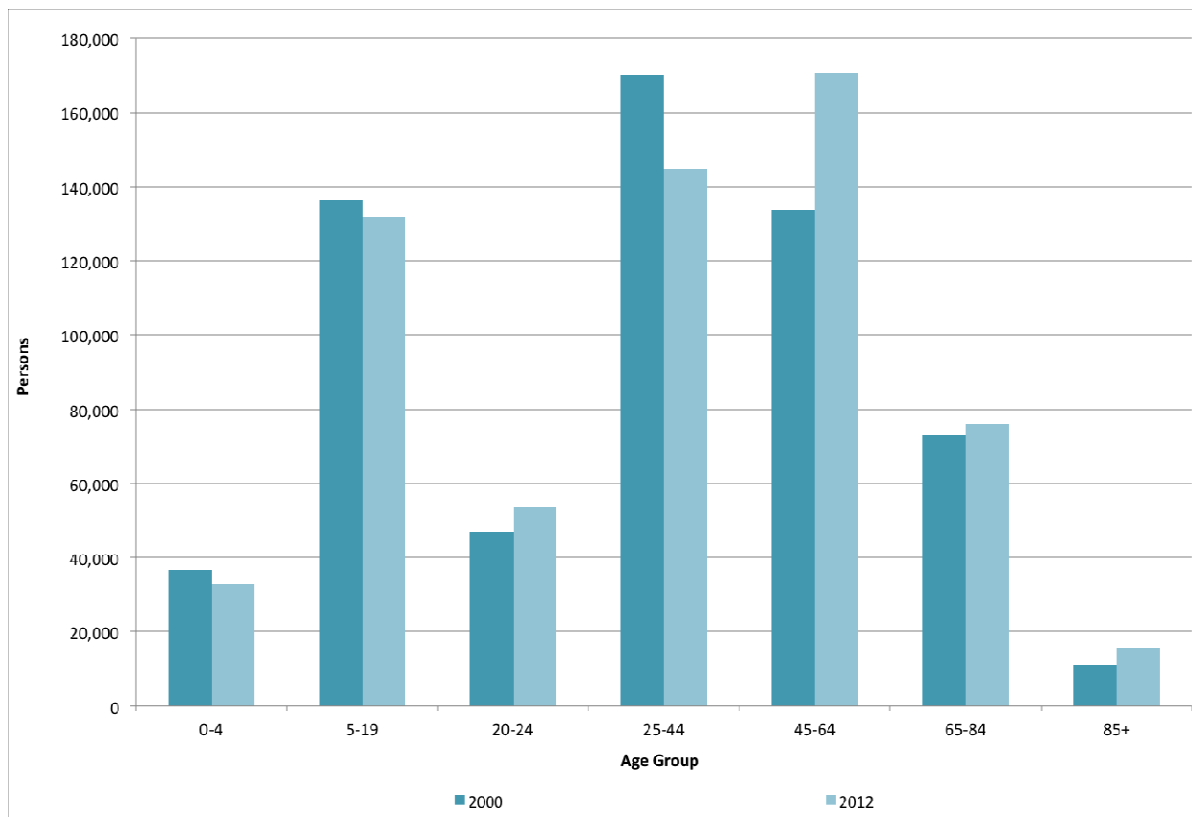


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 One-Year County Population Estimates.

Note: In 2010, an additional Race category of "Some other race, not otherwise specified" was included in the category of "Other, Not Hispanic" which contributed to the significant increase in that category.

The age distribution of the population within the Pioneer Valley region mirrors the aging population trends across the nation, and hints at some explanations for the type of slow population growth that has occurred over recent decades. Between 2000-2012, the region has seen decreases in all age groups except those 5-19 and those 45-64. This suggests a smaller population in its prime wage-earning years, yet a larger portion of the population in or approaching years of dependence on others. While many in the 45-64 year old age category are still fully in their careers, it will be important to note the large proportion of the population (27%) who are likely to move out of the labor force and into retirement within the next decade.

Figure 3: Population by Age in the Pioneer Valley Region

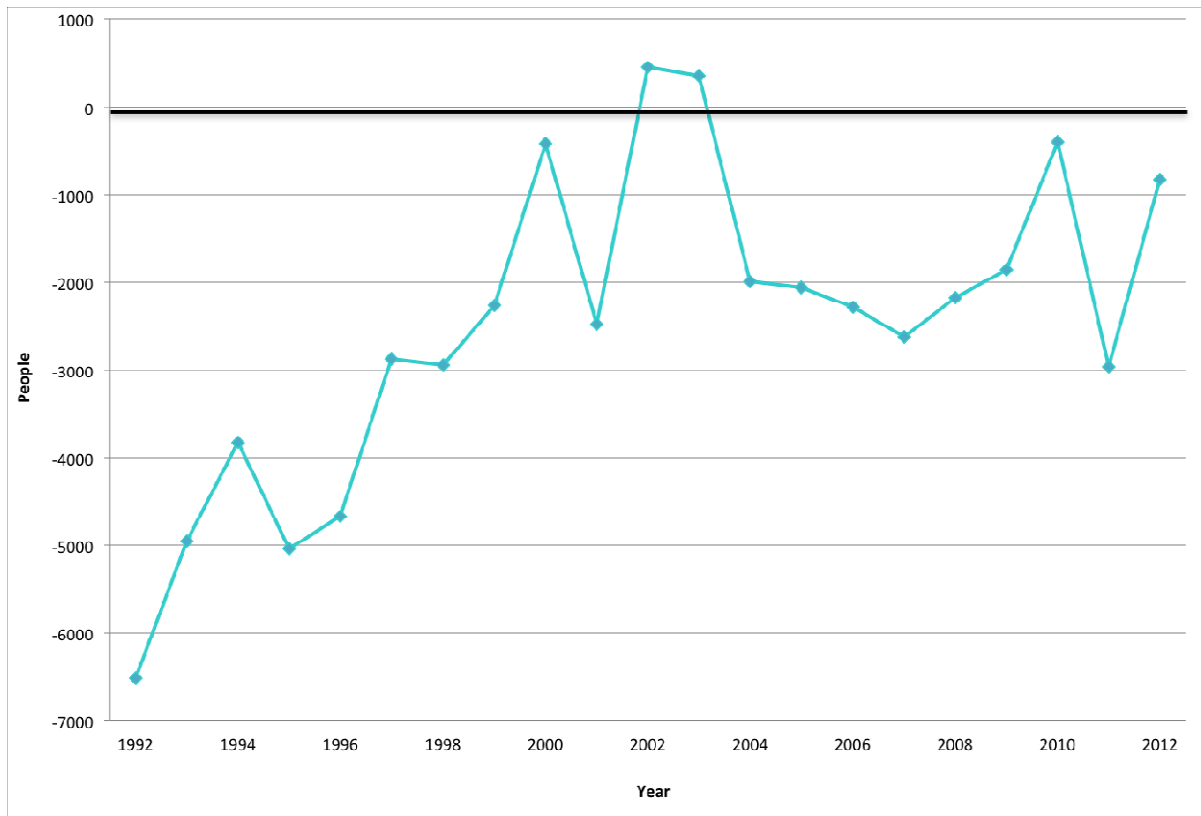


Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2012 1-Year-Estimates

Demographics and Migration

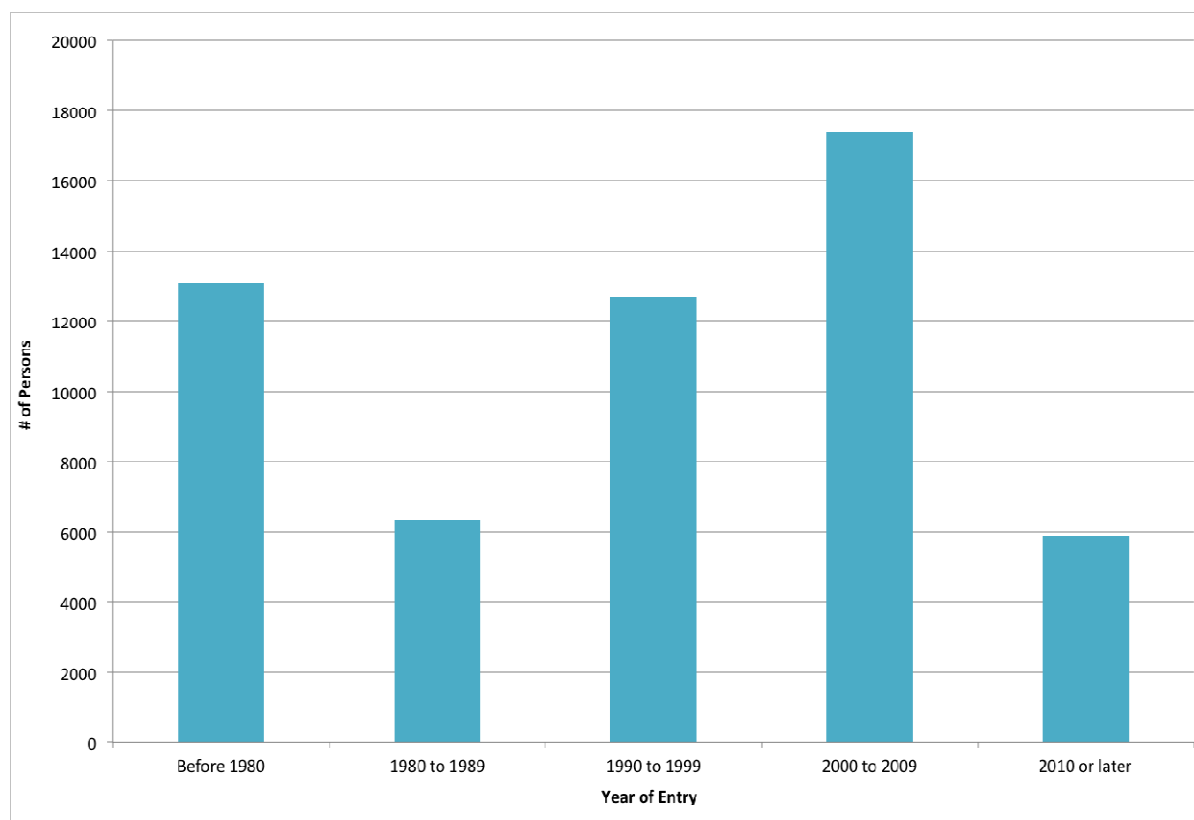
Retaining the population base has been a challenge in the Pioneer Valley region, although trends of out-migration have decreased to half of what they formerly were. In the 1990s, there was a net domestic out-migration of nearly 40,000 people. While the first decade of the 21st century has still seen net domestic out-migration, the loss between 2000-2010 was less than half of the previous decade with net out-migration of about 15,500 people and just under 4,000 additional people lost by 2012. . Migration out of the Valley peaked in 2007 at 2,621 and decreased significantly in the years following. This was also the period during the recession of the 2000s when the housing market crashed and reflected similar trends to those in previous economic downturns. Of concern, 2011 saw another spike in outmigration to 2,963; however, 2012 saw that trend slow again to 831. Although 2012 was hopeful, this trend will need to be watched closely to determine if recent improvements will be negated over the coming years..

Figure 4: Net Domestic Migration in the Pioneer Valley Region



Source: U. S. Census Bureau Population Division, 2012

The Pioneer Valley has always been a destination for foreign immigrants and this continues to be the case. From 1990 to 1999 inclusive, a total of 12,703 new immigrants settled in the Pioneer Valley region. In fact, if not for foreign born immigration, the Pioneer Valley region would have experienced a net loss of population between 1990 and 2000. This trend of foreign immigration has continued and the first decade of the 2000s saw an even larger influx. During the period 2000-2012 inclusive, an additional 23,283 people immigrated to the region from another country representing 3.7% of the 2012 population.

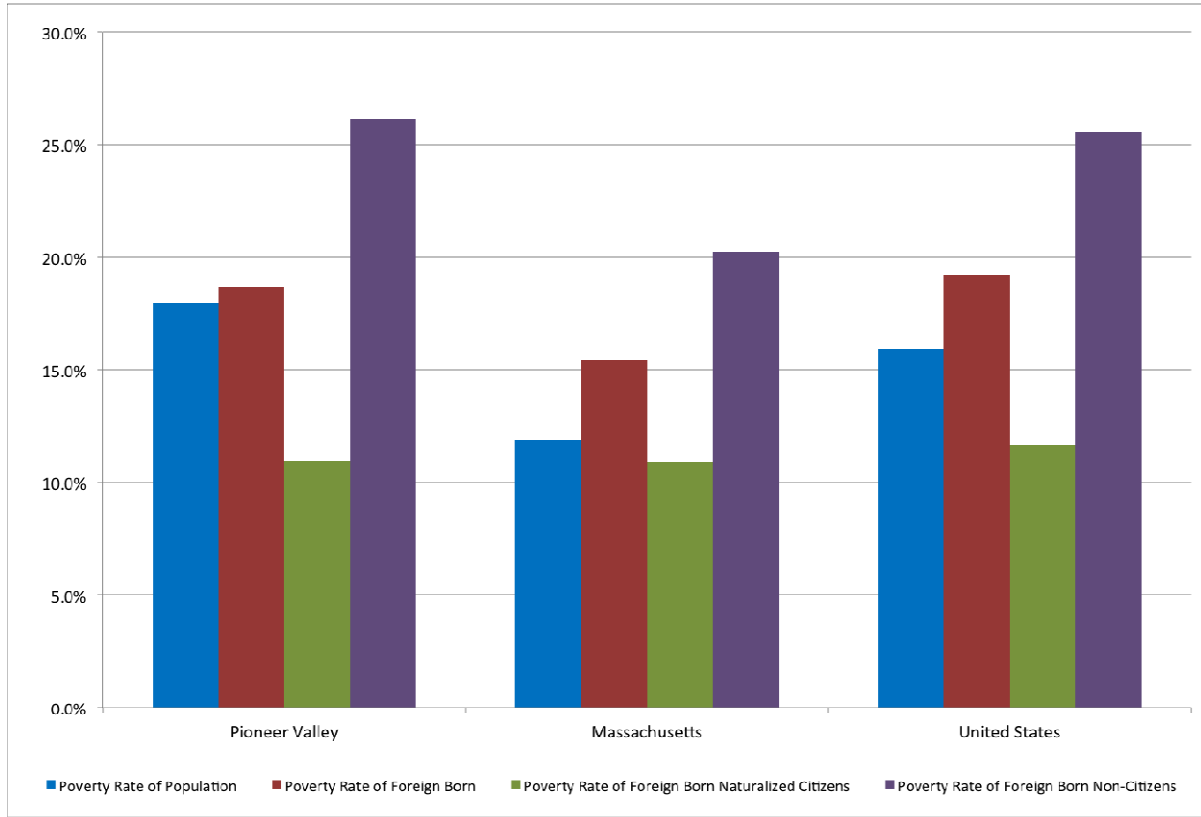
Figure 5: Foreign Born Persons by Year of Entry in the Pioneer Valley Region

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012 One -Year Estimates

A commonly cited concern about the region's high level of international immigration is whether there are adequate services for new arrivals who often enter the country with few resources. However; the Valley, with its history of immigration dating back to the industrial mills of the nineteenth century, has demonstrated the capacity to readily absorb new immigrants into the economy. For instance, in 2012 the poverty rate of the foreign born population was only 0.7 % higher than the total population in the Pioneer Valley region. Conversely, statewide and national trends show the foreign born population with a much higher poverty rate than the general population (by 3.5% in Massachusetts and 3.3 % nationally).

Perhaps even more significant, once immigrants have become naturalized citizens, they have a poverty rate in the Pioneer Valley region that is 7% below that of the population as a whole (see Figure 6). Immigration has been, and will continue to be important to the growth of the region's population and economy.

Figure 6: 2012 Poverty Rates for all Persons and Foreign Born Persons By Citizenship Status



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

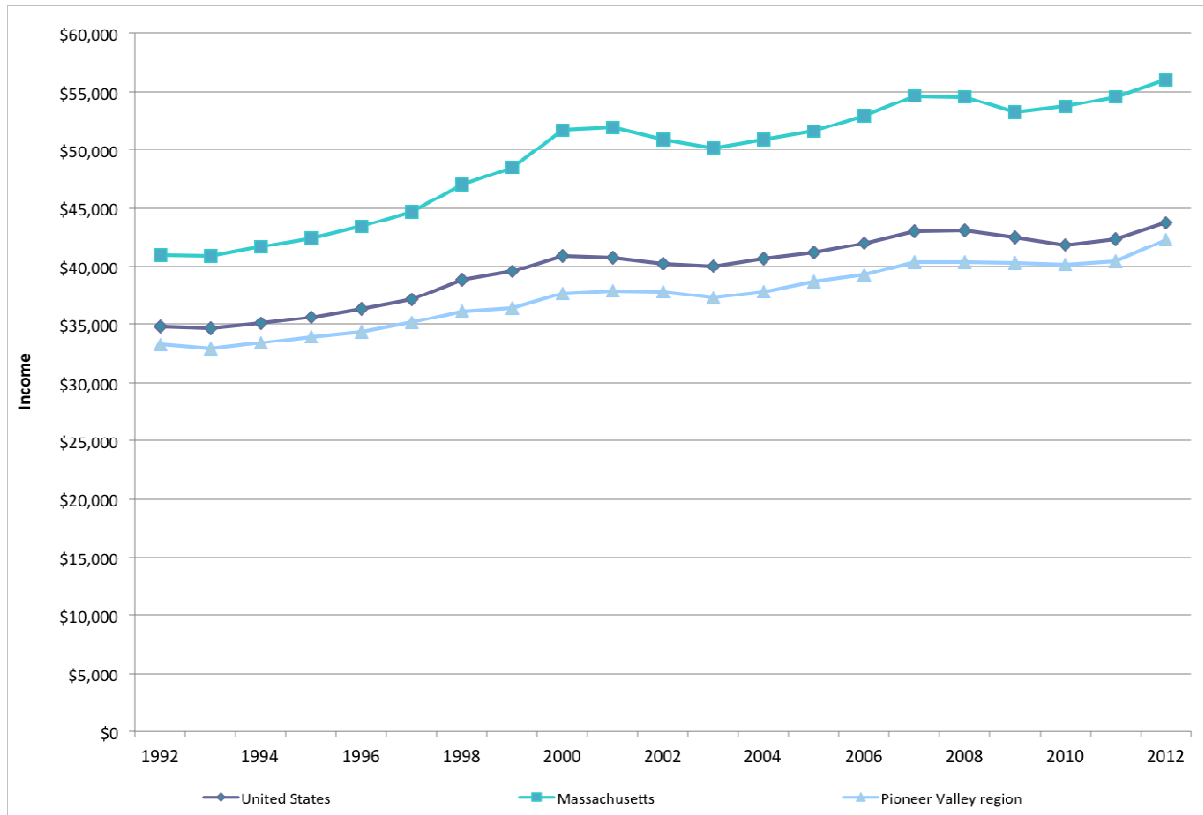
Income and Poverty

To measure economic growth, we examine several indicators including per capita income, median family income, and poverty rates. According to these measures, the Pioneer Valley region experienced economic improvement consistent with national rates during the 1990s, and, while growth was slower than the nation for the first part of the 2000s, the region's economy seems to have been effected less negatively than that of the state and nation.

Per capita income is a useful measure of economic growth because it controls for population change by measuring total income as it relates to population size. Inflation is controlled by converting the annual values to current year dollars using the Consumer Price Index for the Northeast. As can be seen in Figure 7, the region's per capita income is significantly less than the per capita income for the Commonwealth and slightly below that of the nation. Much of the economic growth is the result of economic changes in the 1990s. In 1980, the difference between incomes in the Pioneer Valley and state, adjusting for inflation, was \$3,488 but in 2012 it was \$13,680. This difference exists despite significant regional growth, as evidenced by the 19% growth of per capita income between 1990 and 2012. However, in a comparable time period, Massachusetts incomes grew more than one third faster (25.8 percent). Since 2000, this trend has shifted and growth rates in the Pioneer Valley region have surpassed those of the state and nation: The region's per capita income gains have equaled 11.0% while gains have been a more moderate 7.6% statewide.

According to 2008-2012 5-year estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, "real" per capita income rose between 2000 and 2012 in 15 Pioneer Valley region communities (see Table 4). Pelham experienced inflation-adjusted increases in per capita income exceeding 21 percent. The communities of Chesterfield and Southwick also experienced significant increases in per capita income of 13.38 and 9.68%, respectively. In contrast, Amherst, Holyoke, Southampton, Springfield, and Tolland experienced double-digit decreases in per capita income.

Figure 7: Per Capita Income (Adjusted to 2012 \$)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System, 1992-2012

Note: For each new year, you need to change the formula for the adjusted income so the constant number is the same as the CPI for the most current year.
This formula should be updated for all previous years as well.

Table 4: Changes in Per Capita Income

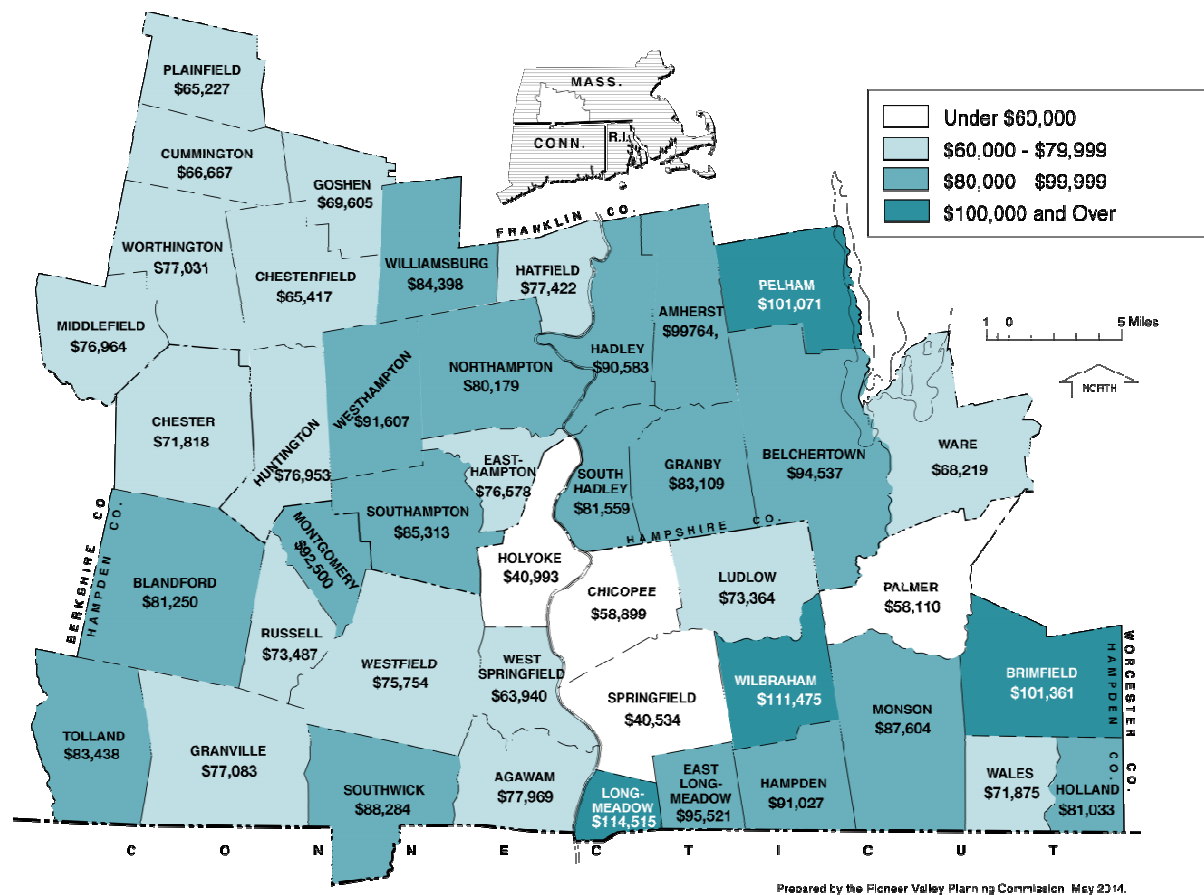
	Per Capita Income (2012\$)		
	2000 Count	2008-2012 Estimate	% Change
Massachusetts	\$36,751	\$35,485	-3.57
Pioneer Valley Region	\$28,432	\$26,565	-7.02
Hampden County	\$27,673	\$25,646	-7.90
Hampshire County	\$30,709	\$29,246	-5.00
Agawam	\$31,951	\$30,672	-4.17
Amherst	\$24,679	\$19,837	-24.41
Belchertown	\$31,067	\$33,195	6.41
Blandford	\$34,391	\$33,499	-2.66
Brimfield	\$33,578	\$33,625	0.14
Chester	\$25,629	\$27,563	7.02
Chesterfield	\$27,218	\$31,422	13.38
Chicopee	\$26,405	\$24,264	-8.82
Cummington	\$30,522	\$30,487	-0.11
East Longmeadow	\$39,169	\$36,499	-7.31
Easthampton	\$31,044	\$31,282	0.76
Goshen	\$31,468	\$29,337	-7.26
Granby	\$32,867	\$32,348	-1.60
Granville	\$31,601	\$28,981	-9.04
Hadley	\$35,325	\$34,366	-2.79
Hampden	\$37,796	\$36,187	-4.45
Hatfield	\$35,138	\$32,080	-9.53
Holland	\$30,829	\$31,824	3.13
Holyoke	\$22,535	\$20,294	-11.04
Huntington	\$27,452	\$29,498	6.94
Longmeadow	\$55,157	\$52,122	-5.82
Ludlow	\$28,471	\$29,325	2.91
Middlefield	\$34,181	\$31,374	-8.95
Monson	\$31,890	\$31,612	-0.88
Montgomery	\$36,737	\$34,966	-5.07
Northampton	\$34,018	\$33,440	-1.73
Palmer	\$26,431	\$26,884	1.69
Pelham	\$42,230	\$53,791	21.49
Plainfield	\$29,434	\$30,138	2.34
Russell	\$30,189	\$29,217	-3.33
South Hadley	\$32,191	\$30,114	-6.90
Southampton	\$37,110	\$33,391	-11.14
Southwick	\$30,809	\$34,113	9.68
Springfield	\$21,570	\$18,016	-19.73
Tolland	\$42,662	\$37,672	-13.25
Wales	\$30,117	\$30,818	2.28
Ware	\$26,776	\$27,905	4.05
West Springfield	\$29,713	\$27,966	-6.25
Westfield	\$29,172	\$27,596	-5.71
Westhampton	\$35,913	\$34,542	-3.97
Wilbraham	\$42,277	\$40,566	-4.22
Williamsburg	\$36,554	\$35,529	-2.89
Worthington	\$34,256	\$34,375	0.35

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000 Decennial Census and 2008-12 American Community Survey Estimates

Table 5: Changes in Median Family Income in the Pioneer Valley Region - 2000 to 2012

	Median Family Income (2012\$)		
	2000 Count	2008-2012 Estimate	% Change
Massachusetts	\$87,324	\$84,380	-3.37%
Pioneer Valley Region	\$72,549	\$73,619	1.47%
Hampden County	\$69,754	\$61,871	-11.30%
Hampshire County	\$81,399	\$82,436	1.27%
Agawam	\$83,676	\$77,969	-6.82%
Amherst	\$86,719	\$99,764	15.04%
Belchertown	\$86,143	\$94,537	9.74%
Blandford	\$84,083	\$81,250	-3.37%
Brimfield	\$84,887	\$101,361	19.41%
Chester	\$73,542	\$71,818	-2.34%
Chesterfield	\$81,230	\$65,417	-19.47%
Chicopee	\$62,502	\$58,899	-5.76%
Cummington	\$69,036	\$66,667	-3.43%
East Longmeadow	\$99,937	\$95,521	-4.42%
Easthampton	\$76,913	\$76,578	-0.44%
Goshen	\$83,197	\$69,605	-16.34%
Granby	\$81,614	\$83,109	1.83%
Granville	\$83,862	\$77,083	-8.08%
Hadley	\$87,654	\$90,583	3.34%
Hampden	\$106,786	\$91,027	-14.76%
Hatfield	\$87,243	\$77,422	-11.26%
Holland	\$80,753	\$81,033	0.35%
Holyoke	\$51,165	\$40,993	-19.88%
Huntington	\$74,075	\$76,953	3.89%
Longmeadow	\$124,254	\$114,515	-7.84%
Ludlow	\$78,902	\$73,364	-7.02%
Middlefield	\$76,314	\$76,964	0.85%
Monson	\$82,995	\$87,604	5.55%
Montgomery	\$93,818	\$92,500	-1.41%
Northampton	\$80,498	\$80,179	-0.40%
Palmer	\$69,897	\$58,110	-16.86%
Pelham	\$101,490	\$101,071	-0.41%
Plainfield	\$65,201	\$65,227	0.04%
Russell	\$68,882	\$73,487	6.69%
South Hadley	\$83,117	\$81,559	-1.87%
Southampton	\$91,992	\$85,313	-7.26%
Southwick	\$91,278	\$88,284	-3.28%
Springfield	\$51,384	\$40,534	-21.12%
Tolland	\$92,639	\$83,438	-9.93%
Wales	\$73,113	\$71,875	-1.69%
Ware	\$64,441	\$68,219	5.86%
West Springfield	\$71,206	\$63,940	-10.20%
Westfield	\$78,350	\$75,754	-3.31%
Westhampton	\$94,349	\$91,607	-2.91%
Wilbraham	\$104,546	\$111,475	6.63%
Williamsburg	\$79,067	\$84,398	6.74%
Worthington	\$85,155	\$77,031	-9.54%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000 Decennial census and American Community Survey 2008-2012 5-Year Estimates

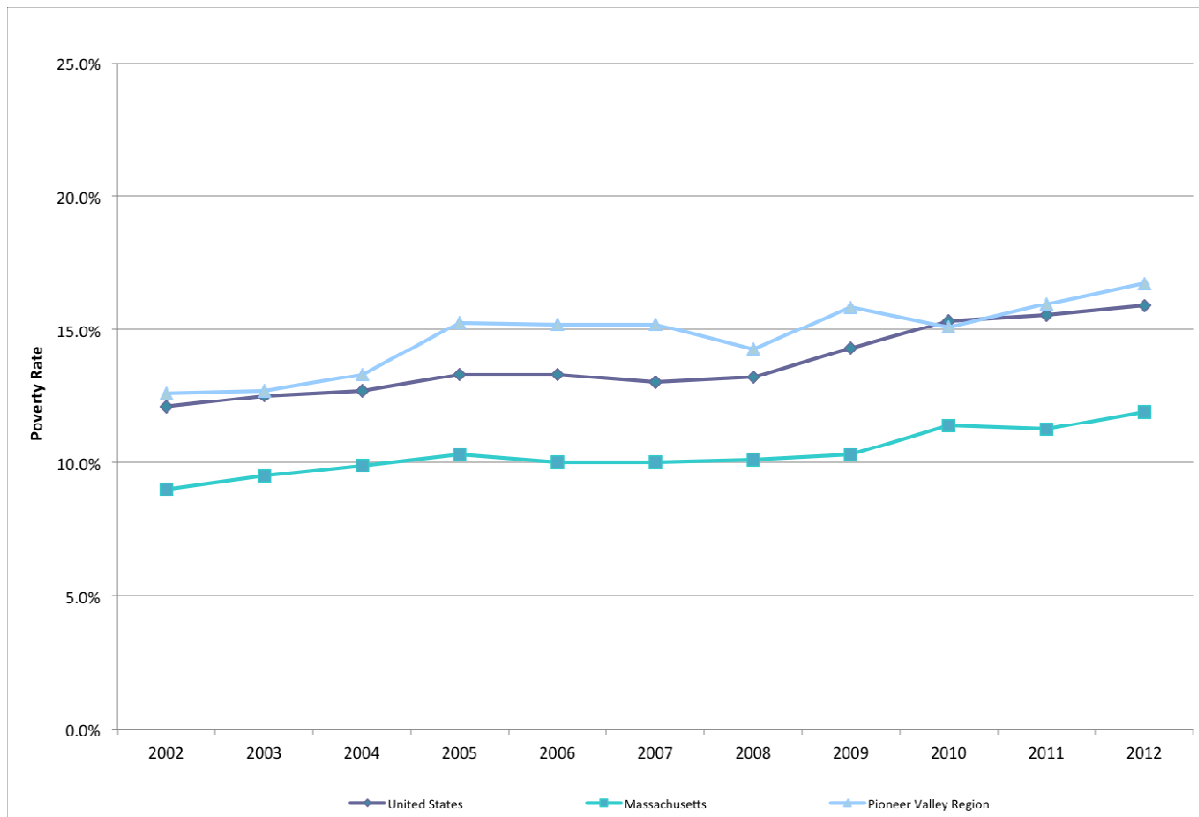
Figure 8: Median Family Income (2012)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, 2008-2012

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, median family incomes in the Pioneer Valley region increased by just over 1% between 2000 and the five year period between 2008-2012 (see Table 5). Within the region there are significant income disparities (see Figure 8). For example, while Longmeadow, Wilbraham, Brimfield, and Pelham have median family incomes greater than \$100,000, Springfield and Holyoke median family incomes are less than \$41,000.

What's more, the lowest family incomes have continued to decline, particularly in Springfield and Holyoke (21.1% and 19.9% respectively). This trend is not exclusive to large cities, as one of the region's smallest towns, Chesterfield, experienced a 19.5% drop. Palmer, Goshen, Hampden, Hatfield, and West Springfield also experienced significant proportional declines.

At the same time, several communities have experienced more positive trends. Amherst and Brimfield, for example, experienced large increases to their median family incomes (by 15.0% and 19.4% respectively). In 1999 median family incomes in both towns were approximately \$85,000 (adjusted for inflation to 2012 dollars). Twelve years later, both median incomes are both well over \$95,000, with Amherst at \$99,764 and Brimfield at \$101,361.

Figure 9: Poverty Rate in the Pioneer Valley Region, 2002-2012

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), 2012

Note: Poverty rates displayed in this figure may differ slightly from Table 6 and Figure 11 as different data sources were required

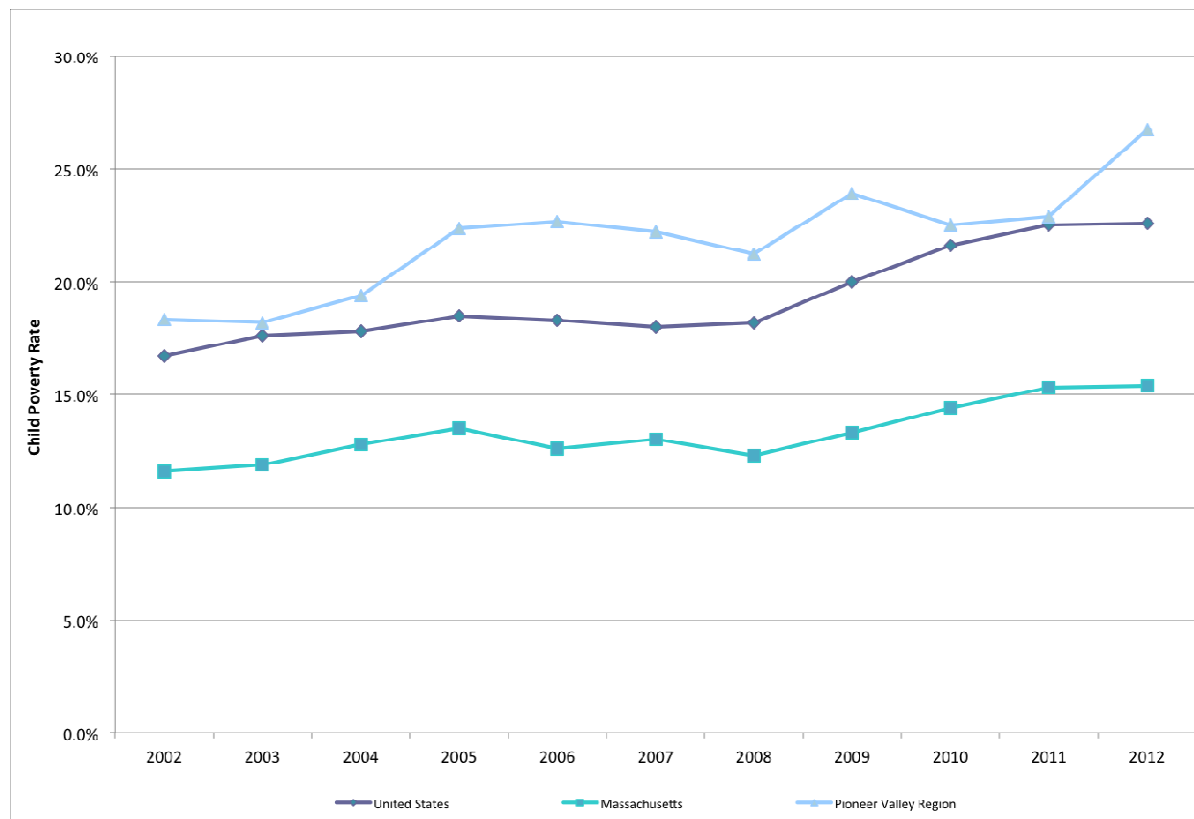
The poverty rate is another measure used to determine quality of life and economic well-being. In the Pioneer Valley region, poverty rates amongst the general population have climbed from a low of 12.6% in 2002 to 16.7% in 2012 (as seen in Figure 9). Between 2005 and 2010, poverty rates hovered consistently around 15 percent, dropping slightly in 2008 but then increasing in 2009 to 15.8 and again in 2012 to 16.7 percent, a rate higher than has existed for over a decade. This rate continues to follow a decade-long pattern of exceeding Massachusetts' overall rate by several percentage points. In 2012, this difference was 5.9 percent. The poverty rate trends, and the per capita income growth patterns previously mentioned, suggest that the region did not share equally in the state's economic growth at the end of the 1990s, nor in the middle portion of the 2000s. While in 2010, for the first time in over a decade, the total poverty rate in the Pioneer Valley region was lower than that of the nation as a whole; the current 2012 rate is 1.9% above the national rate.

In the ten year period from 2002 to 2012, child poverty rates in the region have been consistently higher than those for the United States and drastically so in relation to Massachusetts overall, as seen in Figure 10. Child poverty rates in the Pioneer Valley region rose from 17.1% in 2001 to a startling 27.1% in 2012. Since 2005, child poverty rates in the Pioneer Valley region as a whole have exceeded 20% annually. This indicates that more than one in five children in the Pioneer Valley region has grown up in households with incomes below the poverty line.

According to the U. S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2008-2012 5-Year Estimates, disparities in the distribution of poverty amongst the municipalities of the region are substantial. The major urban centers of Springfield and Holyoke continue to have the highest poverty rates in the region, well above 20 % in all categories (as seen in Table 6). Most alarmingly, the rate of children living in poverty is 42.4% in Springfield and 46.1% in Holyoke.

There has been a significant increase in the number of individuals living in poverty in the Town of Amherst. Second only to Holyoke, the Town of Amherst has surpassed Springfield in the number of individuals living in poverty. The large student population in Amherst is likely a major contributor to the high poverty rate in town, a theory supported by the fact that family and child poverty rates remain much lower than the individual rates. Still, this doesn't explain why there was such a large increase in the poverty rate in recent years. Springfield, Holyoke, Cummington, Hatfield, Huntington, Northampton, Plainfield, Pelham, Chester, Agawam, Amherst, Ware, and Chicopee all experienced significantly increasing percentages of children in poverty. Among those communities close to the urban centers, Westfield and West Springfield have also managed to keep relatively stable family and individual poverty rates but experienced a significant jump in child poverty (3.1% and 11.9% respectively).

Figure 10: Child Poverty Rate in the Pioneer Valley Region, 2002-2012



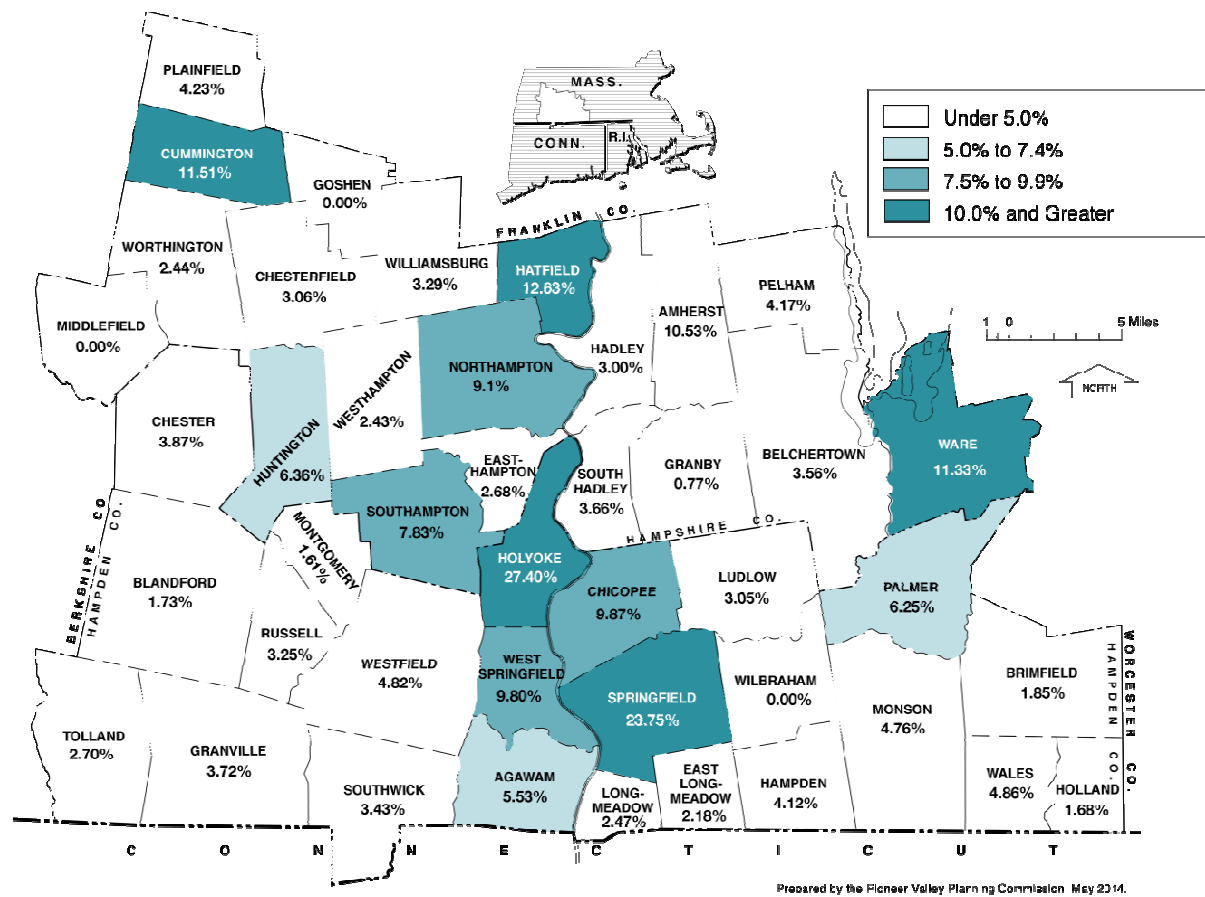
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), 2012
 Note: Poverty rates displayed in this figure may differ slightly from Table 6 and Figure 11 as different data sources were required.

Table 6: Changes in Community Poverty Rates 2000 to 2012

	Families in Poverty		Children in Poverty		Individuals in Poverty	
	2000	2012	2000	2012	2000	2012
Massachusetts	6.70%	7.75%	6.70%	14.00%	9.30%	11.00%
Pioneer Valley Region	10.01%	11.42%	10.01%	23.78%	13.41%	15.90%
Hampden County	11.45%	13.04%	11.45%	26.60%	14.74%	17.10%
Hampshire County	5.05%	5.99%	5.05%	11.70%	9.40%	11.90%
Agawam	4.26%	5.53%	4.26%	12.50%	5.63%	7.60%
Amherst	7.23%	10.53%	7.23%	18.20%	20.21%	29.10%
Belchertown	5.11%	3.56%	5.11%	4.80%	5.90%	6.00%
Blandford	1.72%	1.73%	1.72%	4.60%	3.39%	3.10%
Brimfield	2.15%	1.85%	2.15%	6.30%	4.38%	4.40%
Chester	2.87%	3.87%	2.87%	12.10%	5.85%	8.50%
Chesterfield	3.38%	3.06%	3.38%	4.60%	5.69%	5.30%
Chicopee	9.59%	9.87%	9.59%	21.60%	12.25%	13.70%
Cummington	4.18%	11.51%	4.18%	22.30%	6.64%	12.50%
East Longmeadow	2.09%	2.18%	2.09%	5.10%	3.44%	3.90%
Easthampton	5.89%	2.68%	5.89%	6.10%	8.88%	5.80%
Goshen	4.27%	0.00%	4.27%	0.00%	7.87%	2.30%
Granby	0.95%	0.77%	0.95%	3.90%	2.21%	2.80%
Granville	1.77%	3.72%	1.77%	5.60%	3.38%	6.20%
Hadley	4.76%	3.00%	4.76%	4.40%	6.89%	8.30%
Hampden	1.36%	4.12%	1.36%	6.60%	2.21%	4.60%
Hatfield	1.37%	12.63%	1.37%	12.70%	2.77%	13.60%
Holland	6.51%	1.68%	6.51%	2.10%	7.29%	7.30%
Holyoke	22.56%	27.40%	22.56%	46.10%	26.38%	30.60%
Huntington	4.37%	6.36%	4.37%	10.50%	5.78%	7.50%
Longmeadow	0.97%	2.47%	0.97%	4.70%	2.05%	4.20%
Ludlow	5.27%	3.05%	5.27%	6.40%	6.35%	5.70%
Middlefield	7.32%	0.00%	7.32%	0.00%	8.62%	0.50%
Monson	5.25%	4.76%	5.25%	6.80%	5.58%	9.10%
Montgomery	1.01%	1.61%	1.01%	0.00%	2.94%	2.40%
Northampton	5.72%	7.83%	5.72%	15.90%	9.82%	13.50%
Palmer	5.76%	6.25%	5.76%	9.80%	7.88%	10.30%
Pelham	2.65%	4.17%	2.65%	10.50%	4.87%	4.40%
Plainfield	4.85%	4.23%	4.85%	15.40%	7.99%	8.40%
Russell	7.10%	3.25%	7.10%	5.00%	9.05%	4.30%
South Hadley	4.12%	3.66%	4.12%	9.80%	5.88%	6.70%
Southampton	1.82%	7.71%	1.82%	1.10%	2.36%	6.00%
Southwick	3.80%	3.43%	3.80%	9.10%	6.10%	5.20%
Springfield	19.32%	23.75%	19.32%	42.40%	23.08%	28.70%
Tolland	2.31%	2.70%	2.31%	0.00%	4.23%	3.20%
Wales	1.85%	4.86%	1.85%	6.20%	3.49%	7.60%
Ware	8.43%	11.33%	8.43%	31.40%	11.22%	15.30%
West Springfield	8.66%	9.80%	8.66%	20.60%	11.94%	12.50%
Westfield	6.85%	4.82%	6.85%	10.00%	11.28%	8.80%
Westhampton	1.94%	2.43%	1.94%	1.90%	3.54%	4.90%
Wilbraham	3.15%	0.00%	3.15%	0.50%	5.13%	3.10%
Williamsburg	1.22%	3.29%	1.22%	4.90%	5.48%	7.30%
Worthington	1.50%	2.44%	1.50%	2.90%	3.46%	4.60%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000, American Community Survey 2008-12 5-Year Estimates

Figure 11: Families in Poverty (2012)



Source: American Community Survey 2008-12 5-Year Estimates

Education

The 43 communities in the Pioneer Valley region are served by 39 school districts, nine of which serve only students from kindergarten through sixth grade. The four largest school districts are Springfield, Chicopee, Westfield, and Holyoke, which together, account for slightly less than half of all the pupils in the region (see Table 7). With the exception of Springfield, in those districts, as well as most across the region, school enrollments continued to fall.

In the Pioneer Valley, enrollment remained stagnant, falling 0.72% between the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years. During that time period, enrollment declined in 29 of the region's 39 districts between the 2013-2014 school year. Enrollment dropped substantially in several areas, including Brimfield (-6.4%), Chesterfield-Goshen (-7.7%), Granby (-7%), Hadley (-5.8%), Monson (-7.6%), and Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical (-7.7%). In contrast, only four districts had increased enrollments above 1 percent. These districts were Holland (2.2%), Springfield (2.2%), Wales, (4.7%), and Westhampton (4.2%). It is worth noting that these rural communities with declining enrollments are places where the population numbers as a whole remain fairly stable or are increasing (see Table 1). For example, the population growth in Monson and Granby, was less than 1%, but enrollment declined 7.6% and 7%, respectively. In Goshen, Chesterfield and Hadley, , the population grew by varying amounts with Goshen increasing the most by 12.1 % and Chesterfield increasing by 0.5%while enrollments for the school district declined overall by 7.7%.

Only 12 of the 39 districts have average per-pupil expenditures greater than or equal to the state's 2011-2012 average per-pupil expenditure of \$13,636. The Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical district had the highest per-pupil expenditure (\$20,065) out of all the region's districts serving students in grades K-12. On the other end of the spectrum, Southampton's Pre-K to 6th grade had the lowest average per-pupil expenditure at \$10,074.

In today's economy, a high school education is the minimum requirement to participate effectively in the job market. Unfortunately, the region's average high school dropout rate remains persistently a full 1% higher than the state's (see Table 8). However, in the two communities with the highest dropout rates (Holyoke and Springfield) per-pupil spending is above the statewide average, a factor that may help pull the dropout rates down over time.

Table 7: Pioneer Valley Region School Districts Profile

Public School District Name	Cities & Towns in the Pioneer Valley Region	Student Enrollment			Average Per Pupil Expenditures 2011-2012	Average Teacher Salary 2011-2012
		'12 – '13	'13 – '14	% Change		
Pioneer Valley Region		93,421	92,747	-0.72%	N/A	N/A
Agawam	Agawam	4,113	4,107	-0.15%	\$13,398	\$61,706
Amherst (PK-6)	Amherst	1,206	1,210	0.33%	\$18,388	\$75,452
Amherst-Pelham (7-12) *	Amherst, Pelham	1,533	1,478	-3.59%	\$18,026	\$76,405
Belchertown	Belchertown	2,492	2,416	-3.05%	\$11,396	\$59,138
Brimfield (K-6)	Brimfield	328	307	-6.40%	\$13,626	\$58,694
Central Berkshire *	Cummington-only	1,782	1,736	-2.58%	\$13,282	\$62,124
Chesterfield-Goshen (PK-6)	Chesterfield, Goshen	169	156	-7.69%	\$11,597	\$57,150
Chicopee	Chicopee	7,775	7,779	0.05%	\$12,736	\$62,990
East Longmeadow	East Longmeadow	2,734	2,699	-1.28%	\$12,153	\$75,578
Easthampton	Easthampton	1,593	1,561	-2.01%	\$11,382	\$63,416
Gateway	Blandford, Chester, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, Russell, Worthington	1,009	989	-1.98%	\$13,967	\$56,337
Granby	Granby	1,010	939	-7.03%	\$10,828	\$54,943
Granville (PK-8)***	Granville				\$15,990	\$66,358
Hadley	Hadley	661	623	-5.75%	\$11,268	\$71,348
Hampden-Wilbraham	Hampden, Wilbraham	3,404	3,346	-1.70%	\$12,215	\$66,347
Hampshire	Chesterfield, Goshen, Southampton, Westhampton, Williamsburg	766	756	-1.31%	\$14,281	\$67,050
Hatfield	Hatfield	450	450	0.00%	\$11,078	\$51,109
Holland (PK-6)	Holland	232	237	2.16%	\$13,702	\$58,306
Holyoke	Holyoke	5,782	5,573	-3.61%	\$15,700	\$64,691
Longmeadow	Longmeadow	2,868	2,857	-0.38%	\$13,110	\$65,791
Ludlow	Ludlow	2,874	2,802	-2.51%	\$12,588	\$56,621
Mohawk Trail *	Plainfield-only	1,007	959	-4.77%	\$15,136	\$57,715
Monson	Monson	1,255	1,160	-7.57%	\$11,811	\$59,331
Northampton	Northampton	2,722	2,746	0.88%	\$12,528	\$58,055
Northampton-Smith Vocational & Agricultural	Hampshire County	418	413	-1.20%	\$19,047	\$58,221
Palmer	Palmer	1,535	1,469	-4.30%	\$12,541	\$58,464
Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical**	Belchertown, Granby, Palmer, Monson, Ware	662	611	-7.70%	\$20,065	\$65,184
Pelham (K-6)	Pelham	131	127	-3.05%	\$14,648	\$69,813

(Continued Next Page)

**Table 7: Pioneer Valley Region School Districts Profile
(Continued)**

Public School District Name	Cities & Towns in the Pioneer Valley Region	Student Enrollment			Average Per Pupil Expenditures 2011-2012	Average Teacher Salary 2011-2012
		'12 – '13	'13 – '14	% Change		
South Hadley	South Hadley	1,959	1,939	-1.02%	\$13,310	\$66,478
Southampton (PK-6)	Southampton	552	550	-0.36%	\$10,074	\$63,695
Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School District	Granville, Southwick, Tolland	1,761	1,709	-2.95%	\$11,547	\$59,852
Springfield	Springfield	25,283	25,826	2.15%	\$14,548	\$57,127
Tantasqua (7-13) *	Brimfield, Holland, Wales	1,803	1,779	-1.33%	\$12,985	\$74,006
Wales (PK-6)	Wales	150	157	4.67%	\$11,994	\$57,090
Ware	Ware	1,296	1,267	-2.24%	\$11,919	\$58,573
West Springfield	West Springfield	3,882	3,899	0.44%	\$13,039	\$59,773
Westfield	Westfield	5,922	5,814	-1.82%	\$12,568	\$62,658
Westhampton (PK-6)	Westhampton	142	148	4.23%	\$12,375	\$55,041
Williamsburg (PK-6)	Williamsburg	160	153	-4.38%	\$13,041	\$62,333

Source: Massachusetts Department of Education, School District Profiles, 2014

*Enrollment data for regional school district includes all students who attend schools within the Pioneer Valley Region.
This includes some students who reside outside the Pioneer Valley Region.

**Enrollment data for vocational school district includes students who attend vocational schools within the Pioneer Valley Region.
This includes some students who reside outside the Pioneer Valley Region.

*** The Granville K-8 school district was merged with the Southwick-Tolland school district in 2012, therefore there is no data for the Granville school district after 2011-2012.

Table 8: Annual High School Dropout Rate in the Pioneer Valley region - 2004 - 2013

School District	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Massachusetts	3.8%	3.8%	3.3%	3.8%	3.4%	2.9%	2.9%	2.8%	2.5%	2.2%
Pioneer Valley Region	5.6%	5.8%	4.4%	5.4%	5.1%	4.0%	4.6%	5.0%	4.0%	3.2%
Agawam	3.1%	3.4%	2.1%	4.4%	1.4%	2.2%	1.1%	1.9%	1.3%	1.8%
Amherst-Pelham	3.3%	2.2%	1.5%	2.5%	2.1%	0.8%	1.5%	2.1%	1.6%	1.0%
Belchertown	1.8%	0.5%	1.6%	1.6%	1.0%	1.4%	1.7%	1.1%	0.9%	0.3%
Central Berkshire	3.3%	2.9%	2.3%	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%	2.2%	1.7%	1.7%	1.3%
Chicopee	6.9%	7.3%	6.0%	6.0%	6.2%	5.7%	5.5%	5.4%	4.3%	4.3%
East Longmeadow	0.7%	0.6%	0.5%	1.5%	0.9%	0.6%	0.7%	0.4%	0.6%	0.3%
Easthampton	5.6%	4.5%	1.7%	2.1%	2.7%	2.0%	2.9%	2.9%	1.6%	1.3%
Gateway	6.0%	6.0%	4.3%	4.3%	5.1%	2.4%	2.9%	2.4%	3.9%	2.0%
Granby	3.0%	1.3%	0.0%	0.9%	1.1%	2.0%	1.1%	0.8%	0.0%	0.3%
Hadley	1.2%	1.9%	1.3%	0.6%	0.6%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.1%	0.0%
Hampden-Wilbraham	0.9%	2.0%	0.7%	1.2%	1.2%	0.7%	0.8%	0.6%	0.8%	0.6%
Hampshire	4.4%	1.5%	2.9%	2.9%	1.5%	1.9%	2.4%	1.0%	2.0%	1.0%
Hatfield	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%	2.5%	4.5%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Holyoke	11.1%	9.7%	11.7%	11.3%	11.6%	9.8%	9.5%	9.8%	7.7%	9.1%
Longmeadow	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.1%	0.0%	0.5%	0.7%	0.5%	0.2%	0.0%
Ludlow	4.7%	1.5%	1.6%	1.7%	1.9%	0.9%	1.5%	0.8%	1.9%	2.0%
Mohawk Trail	5.9%	4.4%	2.4%	6.2%	5.0%	4.6%	3.6%	2.0%	2.4%	2.7%
Monson	4.4%	4.0%	1.2%	4.2%	0.5%	3.3%	2.7%	1.4%	1.2%	2.8%
Northampton	3.0%	3.8%	2.1%	1.9%	2.1%	1.2%	1.6%	0.9%	1.5%	1.1%
Northampton-Smith	5.2%	1.6%	3.3%	4.1%	1.8%	2.4%	1.3%	1.4%	1.4%	1.2%
Palmer	1.5%	1.0%	0.4%	4.1%	6.6%	3.6%	4.9%	7.1%	2.7%	2.2%
Pathfinder Voc Tech	2.8%	4.0%	3.0%	1.5%	3.1%	2.8%	2.6%	1.9%	1.4%	2.1%
Pioneer Valley Perf Arts	6.2%	8.8%	2.5%	4.5%	4.0%	1.3%	5.1%	2.6%	1.5%	0.7%
Sabis International	0.0%	1.3%	0.3%	1.5%	1.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.6%	0.4%	0.2%
South Hadley	1.9%	1.4%	1.9%	3.3%	2.9%	2.0%	2.8%	2.0%	0.8%	1.0%
Southwick-Tolland	3.2%	0.5%	1.9%	2.6%	1.8%	4.5%	0.7%	1.6%	1.7%	2.0%
Springfield	8.1%	12.4%	8.3%	10.9%	9.7%	9.6%	10.5%	11.7%	10.0%	6.5%
Tantasqua	3.5%	3.1%	1.7%	1.2%	0.7%	1.9%	1.2%	1.5%	1.4%	0.4%
Ware	10.1%	5.0%	6.3%	7.3%	10.2%	3.6%	4.2%	5.4%	3.8%	4.3%
West Springfield	6.8%	5.5%	4.4%	6.3%	6.0%	5.4%	3.4%	5.1%	3.1%	2.1%
Westfield	4.7%	2.9%	4.6%	5.3%	3.2%	2.4%	3.3%	2.3%	2.0%	2.2%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Education, Statistical Reports, 2014

In 2013, 28 out of 31 districts had dropout rates that were either the same or lower than they were in 2004. While most school districts in the region had dropout rates below the regional 3.2% mark, two districts had rates of much higher concern. Holyoke saw nearly one in ten students drop out of high school (9.1%). Meanwhile, while Springfield had the highest dropout rate in 2012 at 10%, they managed a significant reduction to 6.5% in 2013. This is the first year the dropout rate for Springfield has fallen below 8% since at least 2003. Unfortunately, after a large decrease in high school dropouts last year (7.7%), the Holyoke dropout rate has increased to 9.1%, a similar rate to prior years. Chicopee, another of the region's urban core cities, has seen even greater improvements and reached its lowest dropout rate in ten years, falling to 4.3% in 2012 and remaining at 4.3% in 2013.

In 2012, nearly 30% of Pioneer Valley residents aged 25 years and over had a bachelor's degree or higher (see Table 9). According to the 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 13 of the Pioneer Valley's 43 communities had a higher percentage of college graduates than the statewide average (39% of the population) (See Figure 12). In four communities (Amherst, Pelham, Longmeadow, and Northampton) more than 50% of the residents had a bachelor's degree or higher. In contrast, there were 11 communities (including Ware, Chester, Chicopee, Holyoke, and Springfield) where the proportion was at or below 25 %.

Given the region's rich endowment of higher education institutions, some of these rates are lower than expected. Other indicators, however, point towards the beginning of a positive trend. There has been a 27.1 % increase in the population 25 years and over who have attained a bachelor's degree or higher since 2000 (see Table 9). Additionally, the number of people 25 years and over who are high school graduates increased by 11.6 percent.

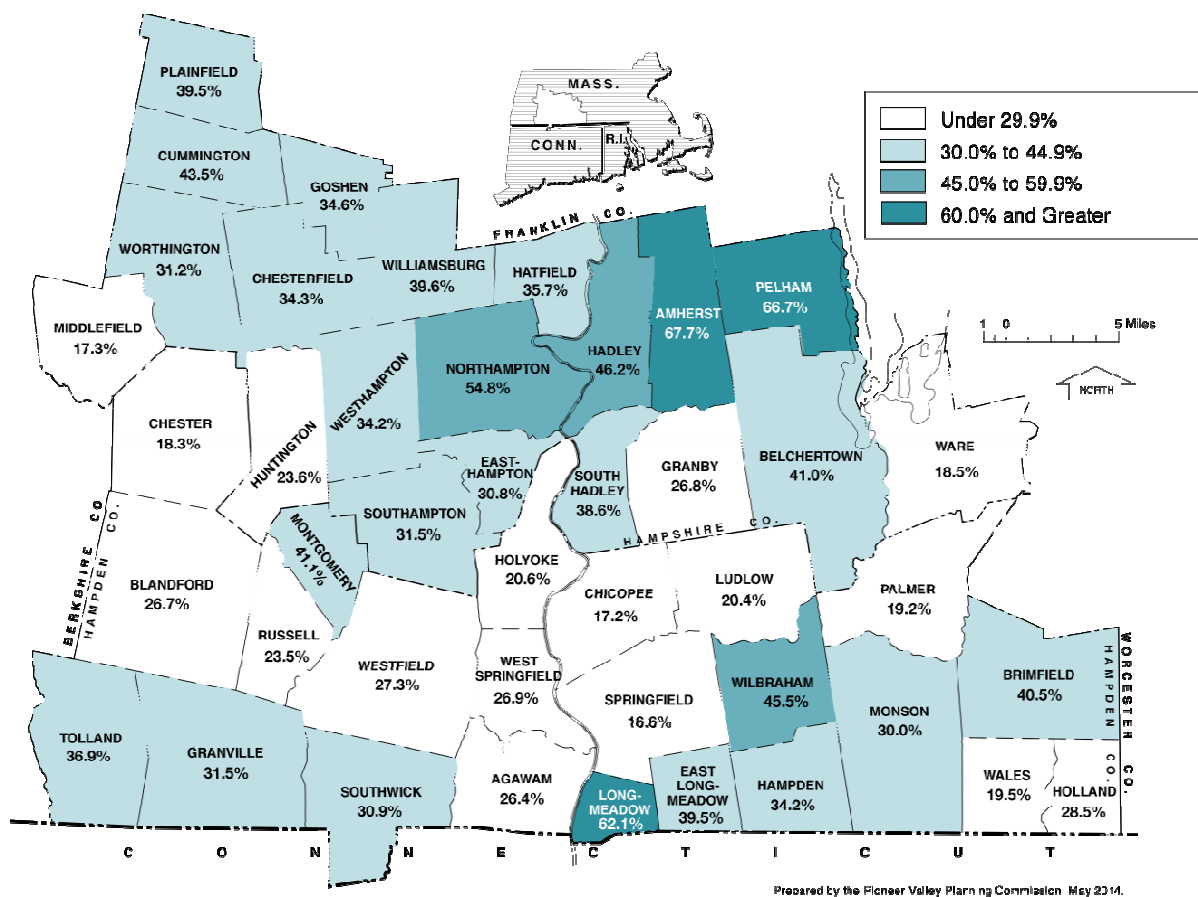
Table 9: Educational Attainment in the Pioneer Valley Region - 2000 and 2012

	2000 Population	% of Population	2012 Population	% of Population	12 Year % Change
Population 25 Years and Over					
Hampden County	295,837	100.0%	308,083	100.0%	4.1%
Hampshire County	93,193	100.0%	99,214	100.0%	6.5%
Pioneer Valley Region	389,030	100.0%	407,297	100.0%	4.7%
Less Than 9th Grade					
Hampden County	22,138	7.5%	18,515	6.0%	-16.4%
Hampshire County	3,104	3.3%	1,396	1.4%	-55.0%
Pioneer Valley Region	25,242	6.5%	19,884	4.9%	-21.2%
9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma					
Hampden County	39,325	13.3%	28,401	9.2%	-27.8%
Hampshire County	6,815	7.3%	4,462	4.5%	-34.5%
Pioneer Valley Region	46,140	11.9%	32,863	8.1%	-28.8%
*High School Graduate					
Hampden County	96,474	32.6%	95,000	30.8%	-1.5%
Hampshire County	24,029	25.8%	24,515	24.7%	2.0%
Pioneer Valley Region	120,503	31.0%	119,515	29.3%	-0.8%
Some College, No Degree					
Hampden County	53,670	18.1%	61,248	19.9%	14.1%
Hampshire County	16,336	17.5%	17,656	17.8%	8.1%
Pioneer Valley Region	70,006	18.0%	78,904	19.4%	12.7%
Associate's Degree					
Hampden County	23,676	8.0%	26,434	8.6%	11.6%
Hampshire County	7,544	8.1%	7,755	7.8%	2.8%
Pioneer Valley Region	31,220	8.0%	34,189	8.4%	9.5%
Bachelor's Degree					
Hampden County	37,752	12.8%	48,933	15.9%	29.6%
Hampshire County	17,995	19.3%	20,825	21.0%	15.7%
Pioneer Valley Region	55,747	14.3%	69,758	17.1%	25.1%
Graduate or Professional Degree					
Hampden County	22,802	7.7%	29,552	9.6%	29.6%
Hampshire County	17,370	18.6%	22,632	22.8%	30.3%
Pioneer Valley Region	40,172	10.3%	52,184	12.8%	29.9%
High School Graduate or Higher					
Hampden County	234,374	79.2%	261,167	84.8%	11.4%
Hampshire County	83,274	89.4%	93,383	94.1%	12.1%
Pioneer Valley Region	317,648	81.7%	354,550	87.0%	11.6%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher					
Hampden County	60,554	20.5%	78,485	25.5%	29.6%
Hampshire County	35,365	37.9%	43,457	43.8%	22.9%
Pioneer Valley Region	95,919	24.7%	121,942	29.9%	27.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census 2000 and American Community Survey 2012 1-yr estimate

*Includes Equivalency

Figure 12: College and University Graduates



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2008-12.

Table 10: Number of College Graduates from the Pioneer Valley Region's Higher Education Institutions

College or University	Location	Graduates				
		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
American International College	Springfield	479	794	946	1,065	1,128
Amherst College	Amherst	445	419	428	483	442
Bay Path College	Longmeadow	386	469	540	654	673
College of Our Lady of the Elms	Chicopee	289	239	346	337	395
Hampshire College	Amherst	289	300	304	308	356
Holyoke Community College	Holyoke	961	1,022	1,095	1,128	1,016
Mount Holyoke College	South Hadley	570	569	599	572	568
Smith College	Northampton	901	840	929	874	846
Springfield College	Springfield	1,631	1,577	1,616	930	981
Springfield Technical Community College	Springfield	831	922	984	1,023	941
University of Massachusetts	Amherst	6,050	6,220	6,517	6,890	7,152
Western New England University	Springfield	904	883	915	899	978
Westfield State University	Westfield	1,082	1,232	1,279	1,210	1,370
Total Graduates		14,818	15,486	16,498	16,373	16,846

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2012

Our region's relatively low educational attainment rates, despite the existence of 13 area colleges and universities (see Table 10), demonstrates the Pioneer Valley's continuing struggle to retain those locally college-educated persons who possess the skills and knowledge critical for the health of the region's economy. The University of Massachusetts, Amherst, a leading national research university, anchors the Five College area of the Pioneer Valley. The other members of the Five College group are the prestigious Smith, Mount Holyoke, Amherst, and Hampshire colleges. Complementing the Five College consortium is a collaboration of eight area schools centered in the greater Springfield area. These include: American International College, Bay Path College, Elms College, Holyoke Community College, Springfield College, Springfield Technical Community College, Western New England University, and Westfield State University. Together, these 13 colleges and universities afford the residents and employers of the Pioneer Valley a multitude of opportunities and advantages that are unique to the region. These assets will undoubtedly continue to aid in the region's economic development initiatives.

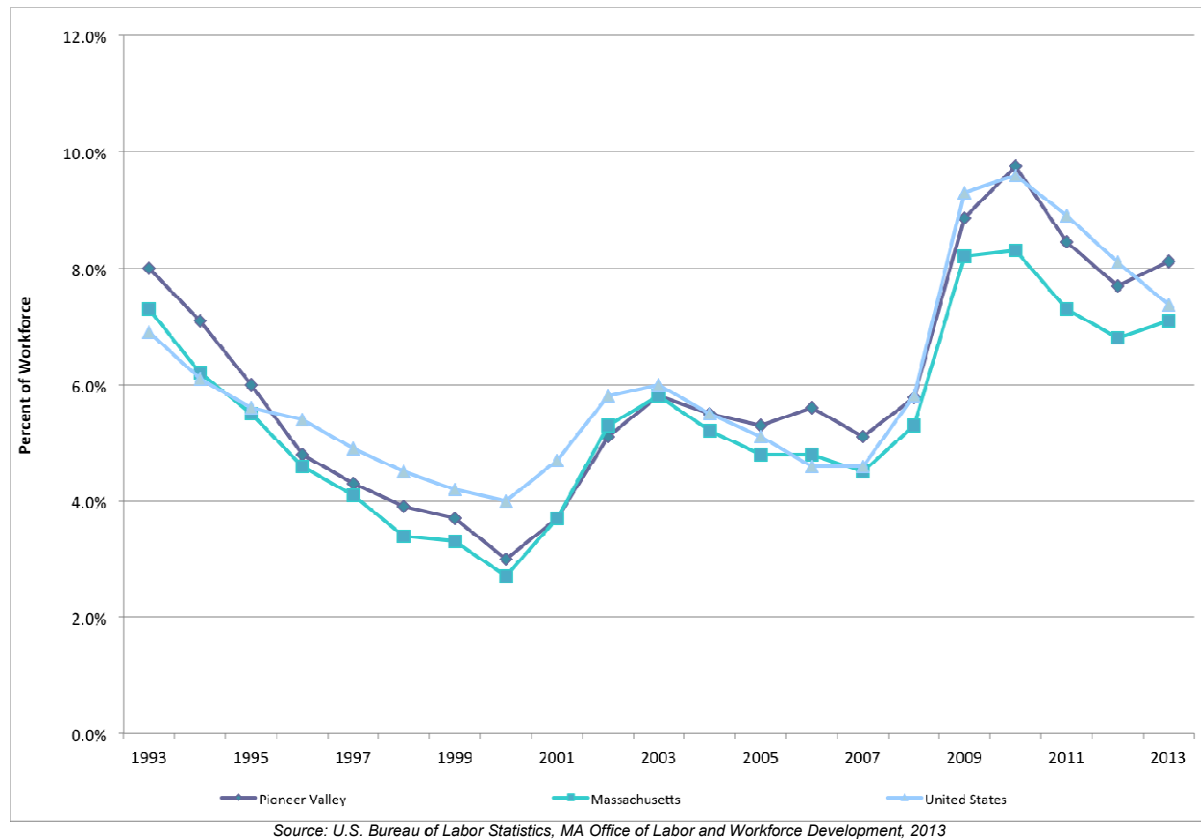
The Economy

The Workforce and Employment

After experiencing the highest unemployment in ten years in 2010, the Pioneer Valley's economy improved in 2011 and 2012. Unemployment rates lowered from 8.5% in 2011 to 7.7% in 2012; however, the number of employed people decreased from 287,960 in 2011 to 282,999 in 2012. The declining unemployment rate is more directly attributable to a smaller labor force which decreased from 314,556 to 306,602 between 2011 and 2012. While the unemployment rate has shown improvements in the past few years, the decline in labor force participation may be due to people dropping out of the labor force because of a sluggish economy. Of course this cannot be assumed as the only cause of labor force reductions, as a declining labor force size could also be due to larger rates of retirement amongst a large population of older workers, among other factors.

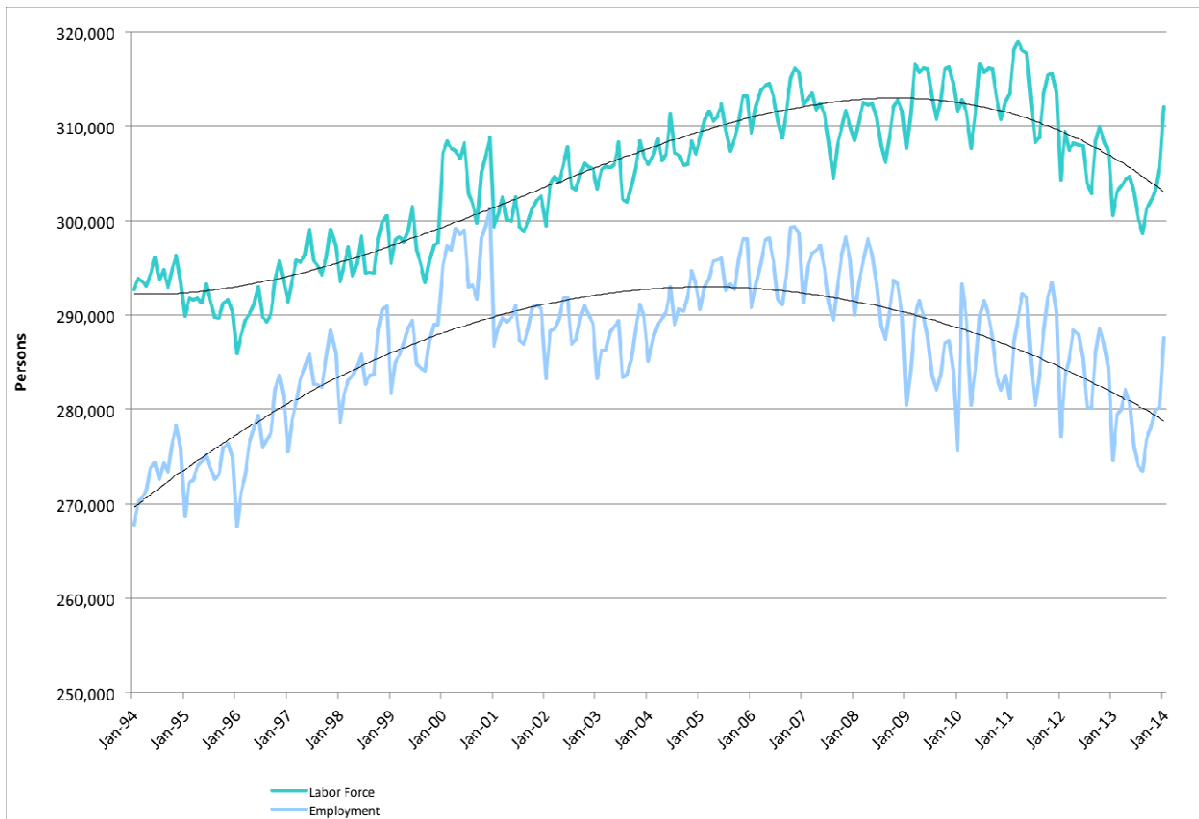
In 2013, this trend appeared to reverse as the unemployment rate increased again to 8.1% while the total number of people employed also increased by nearly 2,000 people (Figure 13).

On the state level, unemployment rates also increased, while the nation experienced an overall decrease. Nation-wide, unemployment lowered to 8.1% in 2012 from 8.9% in 2011, and the Massachusetts rate fell from 7.4% to 6.7%. Still, comparing these rates to 2007 figures shows an increase in unemployment of 3.5% (nation-wide) and 2.2% (state-wide). While progress is beginning to be made, the national, state, and regional economies still face a long road to recovery.

Figure 13: Unemployment Rates

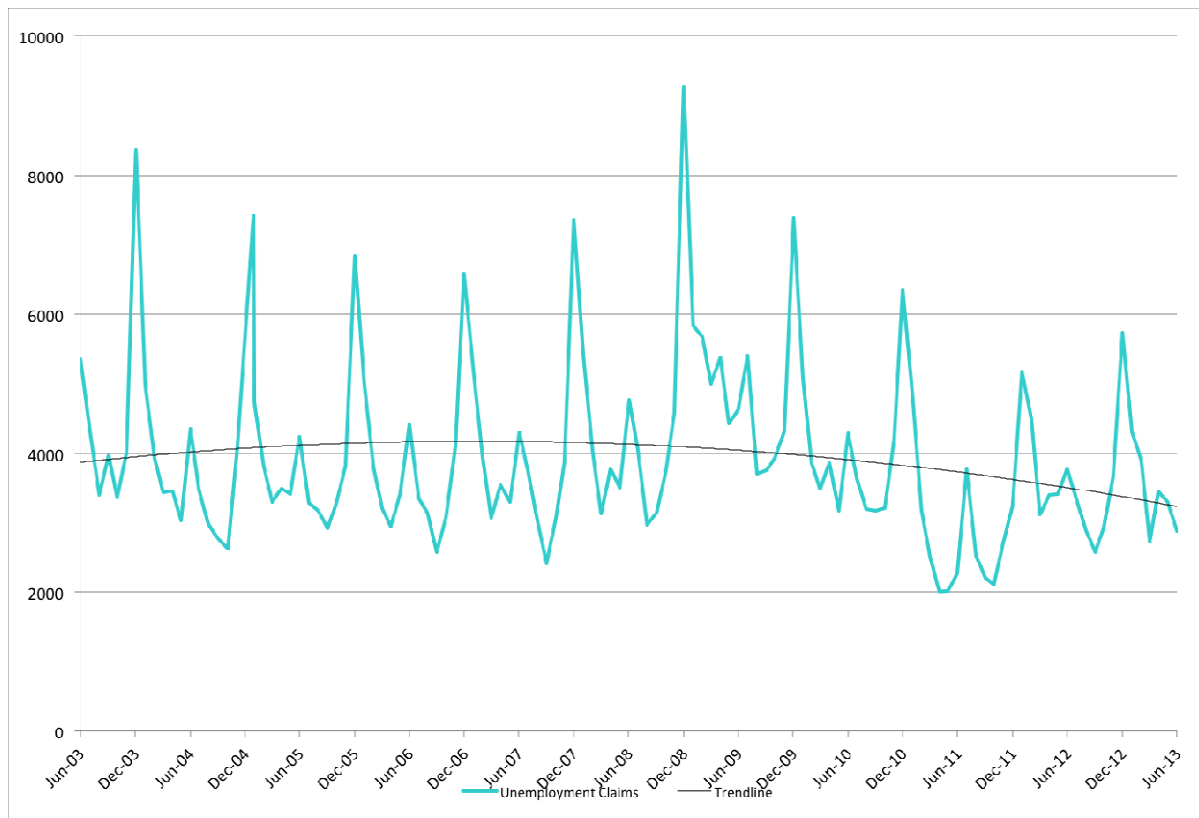
While the labor force gained strength between 2010 and 2011, rising to the highest levels in twenty years (314,556 participants), this trend was followed by decline in 2012, decreasing by 7,954 participants between 2011 and 2012. There has been a slight rebound in 2013 yet with fewer than 310,000 people, this was the second smallest labor force of the Pioneer Valley since the year 2001(see Figure 14). Between 1993 and 2003, the number of people who work in the Pioneer Valley rose from 272,174 to 294,499 (a gain of 24,810 jobs); however, between 2003 and 2013, the number of people employed fell by nearly 10,000 jobs. While the labor force grew by just under 14,000 people between 2003-2013, the number of people unemployed increased by 1,421 (see Figure 13).

Figure 14: Pioneer Valley Region Labor Force and Employment with Trend Lines



Source: MA Office of Workforce Development, 1993-2013

Unemployment claims have fluctuated greatly over the last few years, demonstrating the unpredictable nature of the economic recovery. While there was a decline in the number of new unemployment claims in 2011, there was an increase in unemployment claims in 2012. Data available for the first portion of 2013 showed another decrease in new unemployment claims. The number of individuals filing new claims for unemployment insurance tends to fluctuate markedly by month, but December traditionally sees the highest number of new claims as employers let go of workers they had hired for the holiday season. Therefore, comparing new claims from December to December provides a helpful measure of economic health. In December 2008, the number of new claims in Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden Counties was 9,268, the highest since 2001. In 2010, the December new-claims figure dropped to 6,391 and in 2011 it was down to 3,256; however, it appears that end of year unemployment claim increases were forestalled until January 2012, as the number of applicants increased to 5,165 the following month. In December 2012, the number of claims were lower than December 2010, 5,737 to 6,361 respectively, hinting at a slowly recovering economy (Figure 15).

Figure 15: New Unemployment Insurance Claims, 2003 to 2013

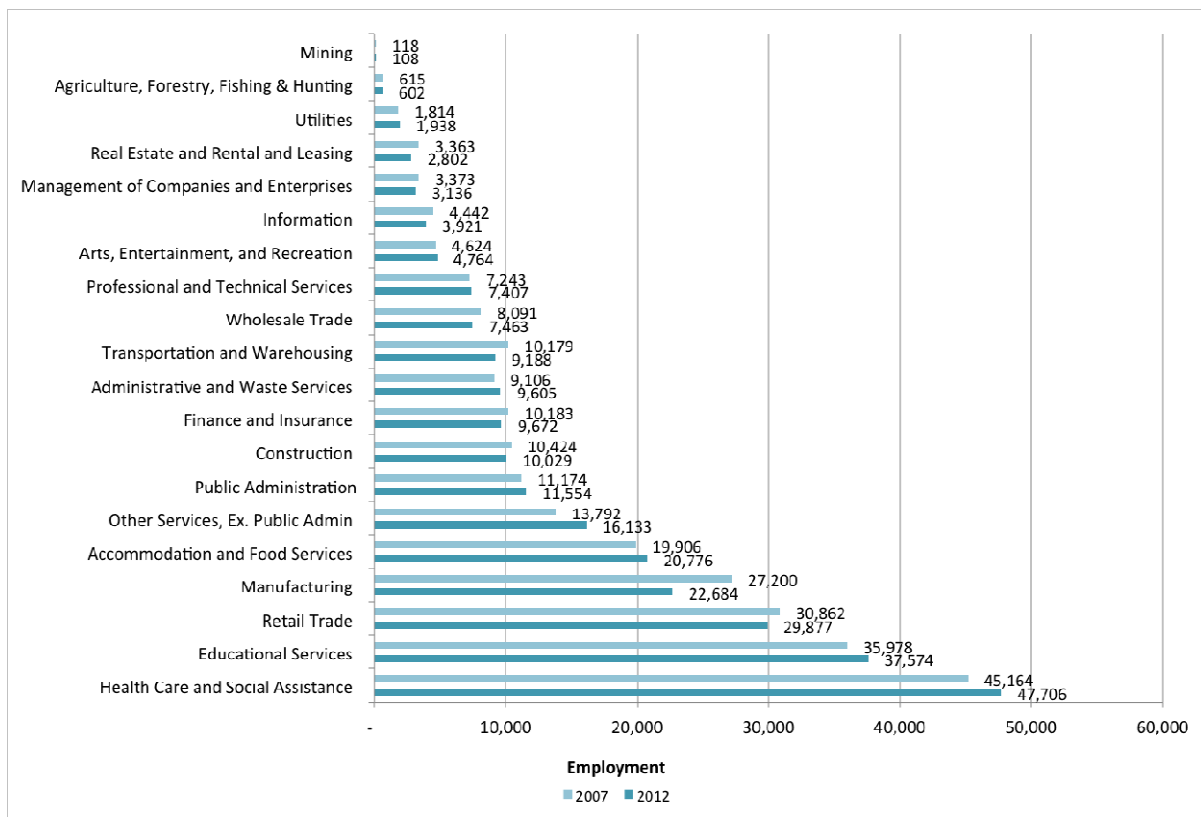
Source: MA Office of Labor and Workforce Development, *Unemployment Insurance Claims, 2003-2013*
 Note: This data is only available by Workforce Investment Board, so it includes Franklin County

Employment Distribution

The region's economy is in transition. Manufacturing was once the mainstay of the region's economy, employing more than 29 percent of the workforce in 1980. Like most of the nation, service sector employment is increasing in the Pioneer Valley region while the number of manufacturing jobs has decreased. Examples of professions in the service sector include healthcare, education, and other industries that focus on customer-provider interactions: automotive/household goods repair, beauty salons and barber shops, funeral homes, political organizations, and pet care. From 1990 to 2000, the service sector's share of total private sector jobs grew from 36.0 to 40.9 percent and as of 2011 the service sector comprised about 54% of the private sector. Manufacturing's share of jobs declined from 14.4 % in 2000 to 8.8 % in 2012.

Between 2007 and 2012, the fastest growing industries in the Pioneer Valley region were utilities, healthcare and social assistance, administrative and waster services, educational services, and other services (Figure 16). These industries are components of the larger human, social, and health services component of the region's economy, which provided 23% of all employment in the Pioneer Valley (including Franklin County) in 2009. (For a detailed analysis of this portion of the regional economy, see the PVPC data digest on The Economic Impact of Human, Social, and Health Service Organizations in the Pioneer Valley on the [PVPC website](#).) Both educational and food/accommodation services grew by approximately 4.4%. In 2012, the four largest industries in the Pioneer Valley region, by total employment, were healthcare and social assistance; educational services; retail trade; and manufacturing. These four sectors account for 54% of the employment in the Pioneer Valleyregion.

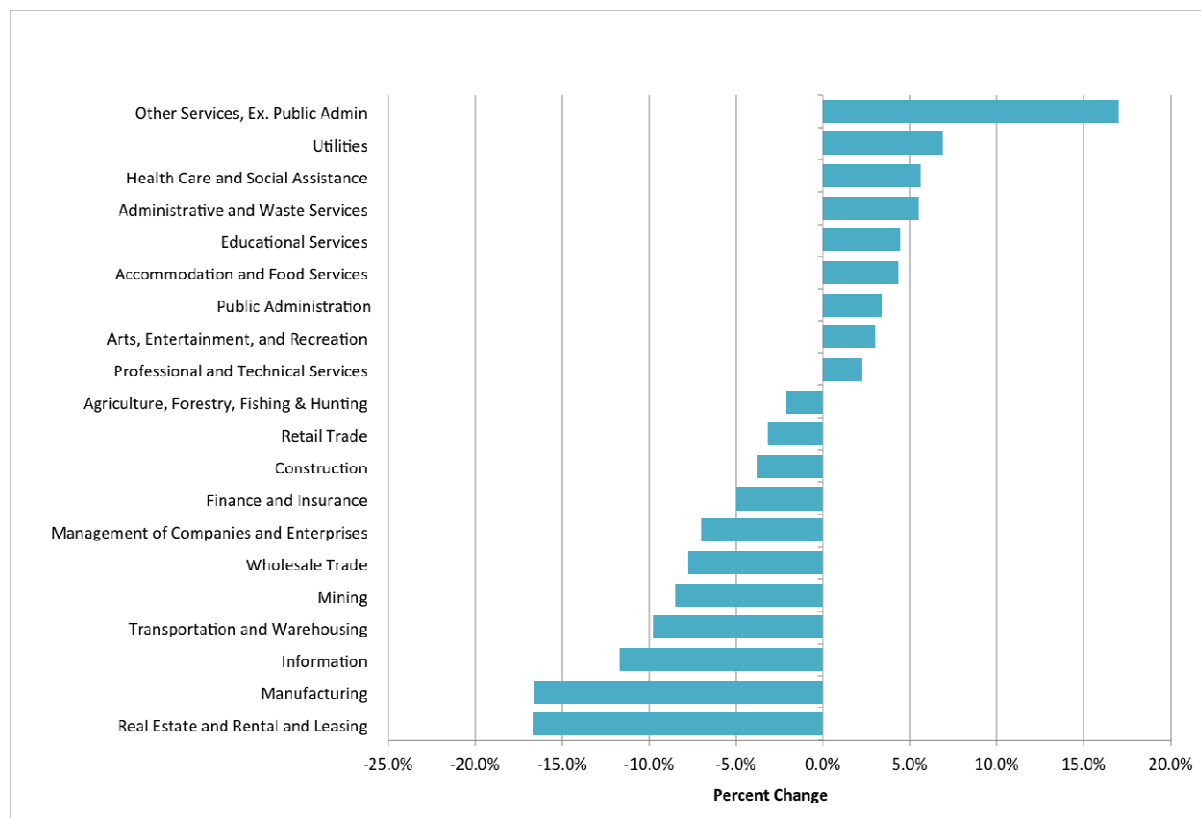
Figure 16: Employment in the Pioneer Valley Region by Major Industry, 2007 and 2012



Source: Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development, ES-202 Program, 2012

Despite the large number of people employed in manufacturing, employment in the industry fell 16.6% between 2007 and 2012. This decline represents the ongoing transition from a manufacturing based economy to a service and knowledge based economy. Other industries that experienced significant decreases were: information, real estate and rental and leasing, construction, wholesale trade, and transportation and warehousing.

It is somewhat worrisome that two of the fourteen Pioneer Valley region industries with employment losses between 2007 and 2012 were the information sector and management of companies and enterprises (see Figure 17). Both are “new economy” industries that pay good wages and employ sought-after knowledge workers. Further research should be conducted to understand the employment losses in these industries.

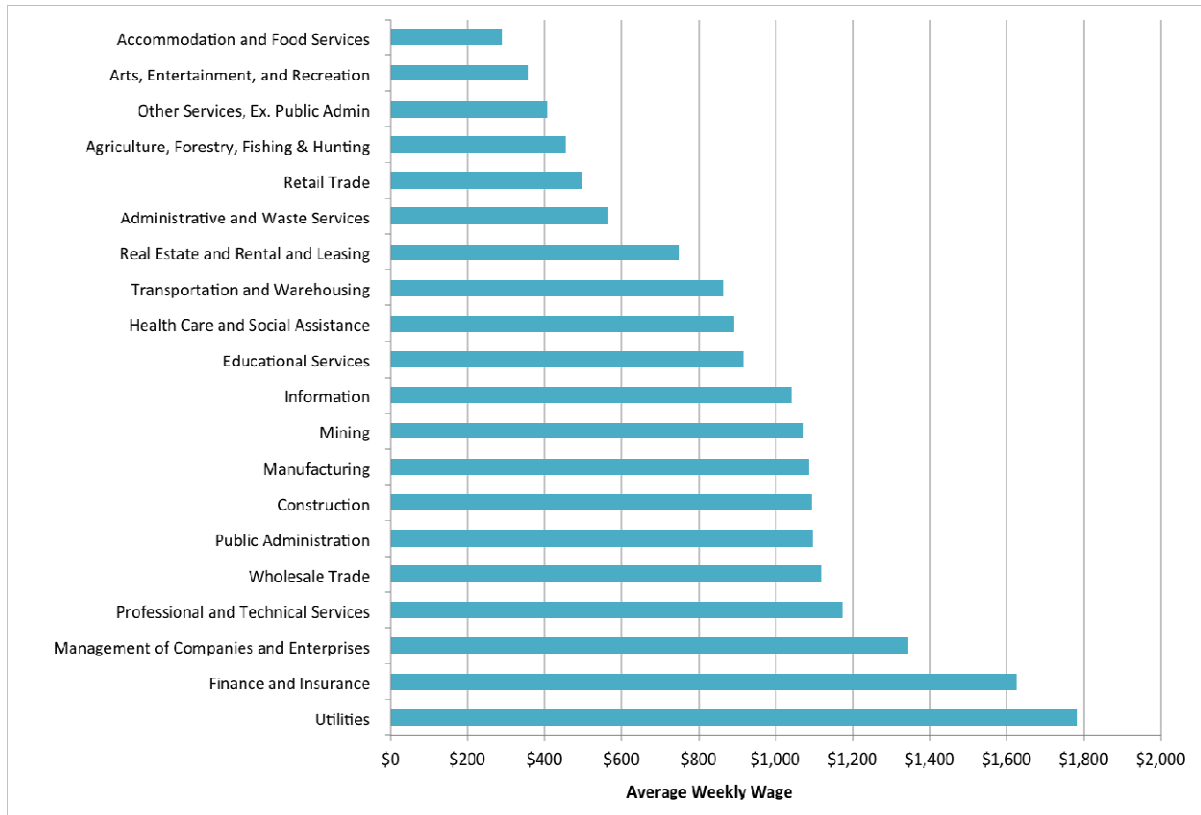
Figure 17: Change in Pioneer Valley Region Employment by Major Industry, 2007 to 2012

Source: Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development, ES-202 Program, 2011

Work in utilities, finance and insurance, and management of companies and enterprises offer the highest weekly wages. Each industry offers a weekly wage greater than \$1,300 (see Figure 18).

Manufacturing, educational services, and healthcare, three of the region's largest industries by employment, have average weekly wages between \$891 and \$1,085. Unfortunately, several of the region's faster growing industries – accommodation and food services as well as other services – are among the lowest paying with average weekly wages of \$290 and \$408 respectively. Accommodation and food services also had the lowest average weekly salary, but this may be affected by a high rate of part-time work in this industry.

Figure 18: Average Weekly Wages by Industry in the Pioneer Valley Region, 2012



Source: Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development, ES-202 Program, 2012

Regional Employment

Within the Pioneer Valley region, nearly half (44%) of all employment is located in the urbanized communities of Springfield, Holyoke, and Chicopee, reaching a combined total employment of nearly 116,000. The northern urban areas, Northampton and Amherst, employ more than 33,800 people. Other communities with high employment totals include the suburbs directly around the region's urban core, such as Agawam, Westfield, and West Springfield, each employing over 10,000 people. The City of Springfield alone is home to 28.5% of the region's jobs.

A comparison of average weekly wages and total wages for the region's employment centers reveals some discrepancies. The total employment in Springfield in 2012 was 340% of the total employment of Holyoke, but the total wages paid was more than 400% of the amount paid in Holyoke, indicative of the much higher average wages for jobs located in Springfield. This is also shown in the \$188 difference in the average weekly wages between Springfield (\$964) and Holyoke (\$776). Although workers in Chicopee were paid a higher average weekly wage (\$783) than those in Holyoke, the total employment was lower resulting in lower total wages. There is a significant gap in total employment and average wages between the northern cities of Northampton and Amherst. Although the total employment in Amherst was only 15,595, the average weekly wage was \$868; in contrast, total employment in Northampton was 18,249 but the average weekly wage was \$843, a difference of \$23 per week. These differences also appear in a comparison of suburban towns located near the urban core cities, like Agawam, East Longmeadow, and Ludlow. Total employment was higher in Agawam (11,953) than in East Longmeadow (7,685) or Ludlow (6,564). However, the average wage in Agawam was lower at \$806 than in East Longmeadow at \$845 and about the same as Ludlow, at \$804.

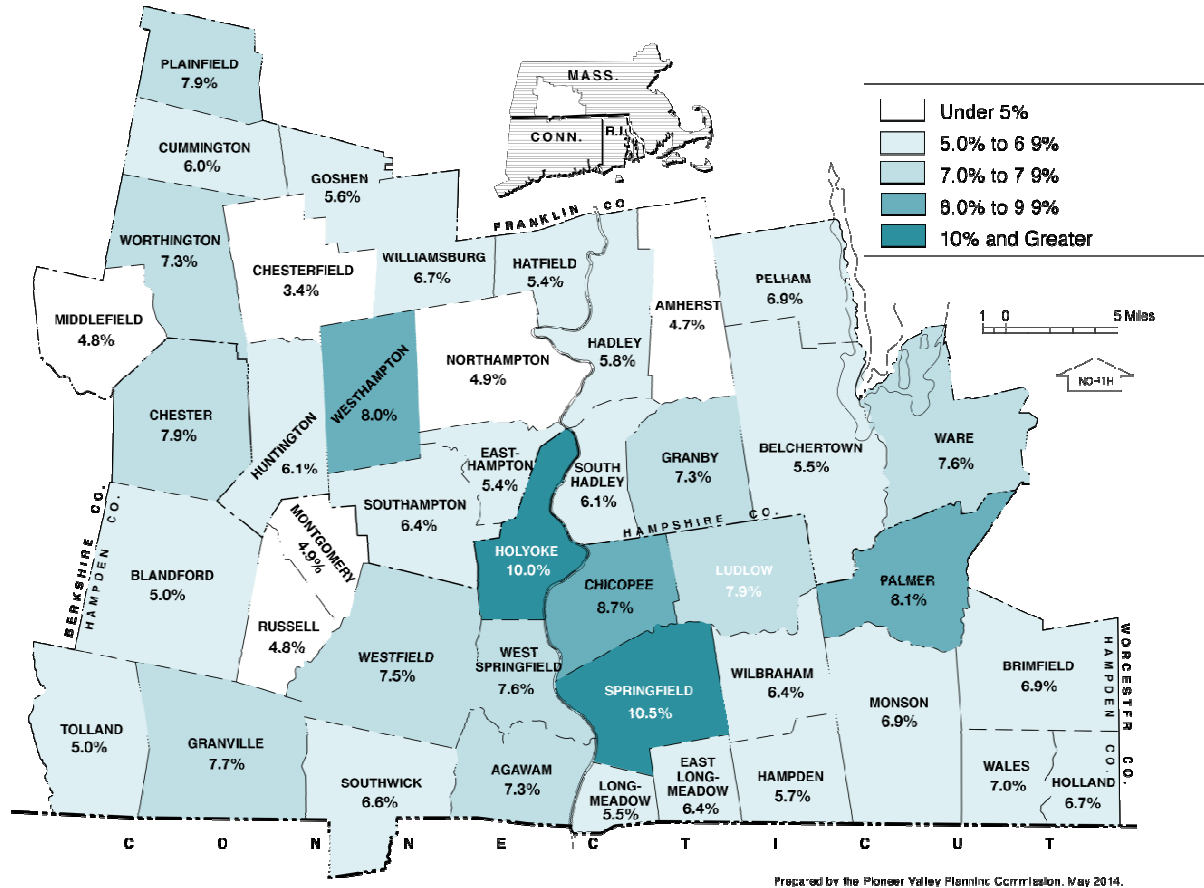
Table 11: Pioneer Valley Region's Top 10 Employment Centers for 2012

Community	Total Employment	Percent of Region's Employment	Average Weekly Wage	Total Wages
Springfield	75,045	28.48%	\$964	\$3,762,410,520
Holyoke	22,039	8.36%	\$776	\$889,119,762
Chicopee	18,730	7.11%	\$783	\$762,232,298
Northampton	18,249	6.92%	\$843	\$800,024,521
West Springfield	17,477	6.63%	\$826	\$751,123,736
Westfield	17,140	6.50%	\$737	\$656,653,229
Amherst	15,595	5.92%	\$868	\$703,879,125
Agawam	11,953	4.54%	\$806	\$500,699,686
East Longmeadow	7,685	2.92%	\$845	\$337,532,890
Ludlow	6,564	2.49%	\$804	\$274,515,006

Source: Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development, 2013

The regional map showing unemployment rates by workers' place of residence in 2013 (Figure 19) indicates that some of the region's largest employment centers also have high unemployment rates among their residents, suggesting that residents of some urban communities are not benefiting from their proximity to the region's leading employers. Springfield, which had the highest number of jobs (total employment) in the region (as seen in Table 11), also had the highest unemployment rate among residents at 10.5%. Holyoke ranked second for total employment but their unemployment rate (10.0%) ranks second highest in the region for residents of the community. Chicopee was the third largest employer in 2012, but had an 8.9% unemployment rate for its residents in 2012.

Figure 19: Unemployment Rates by Worker's Place of Residence, 2012



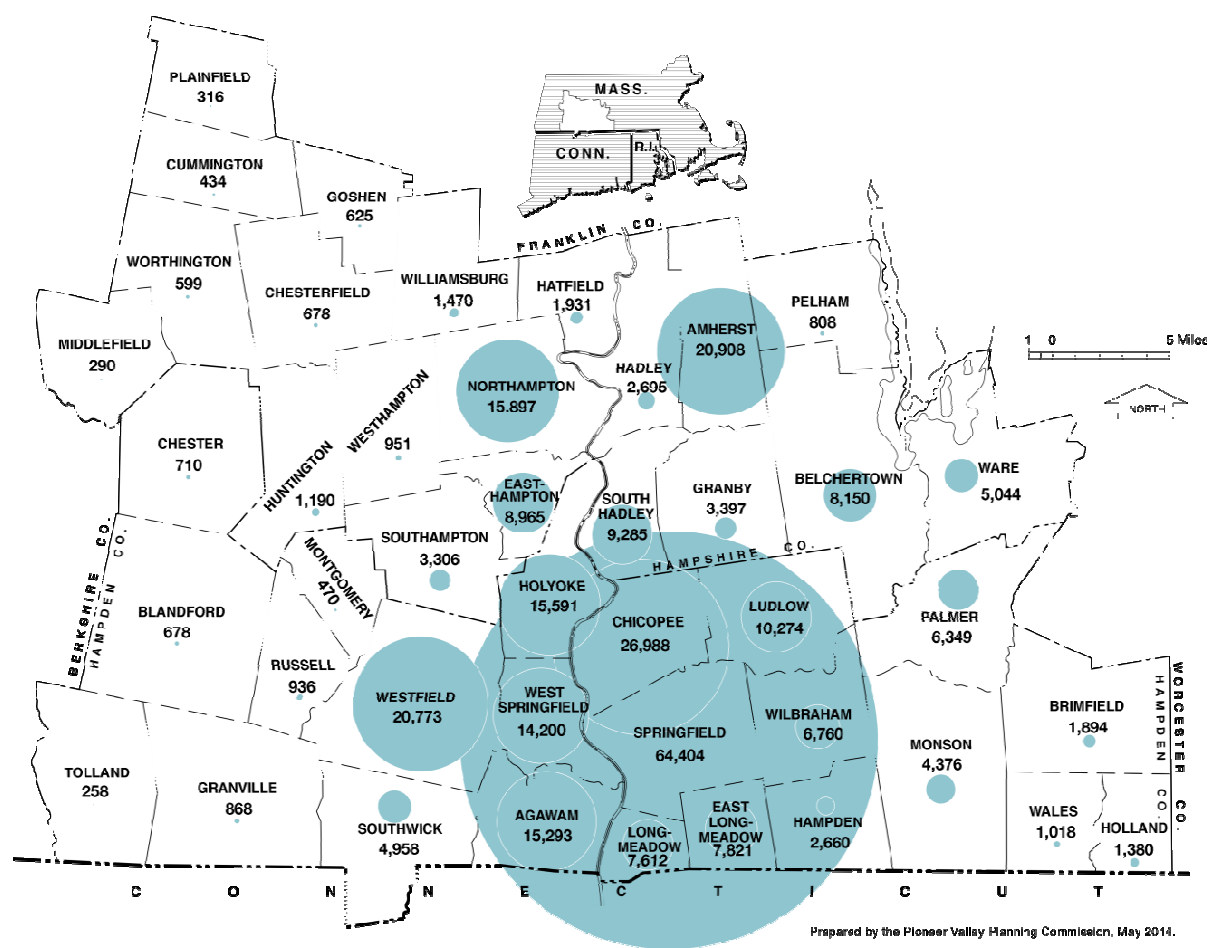
Prepared by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, May 2014.

Source: MA Office of Labor and Workforce Development, 2013

A comparison of the total employment in the top employment centers in 2012 (Table 11) and the labor force (Figure 20) indicates that not all of the region's employment centers are importing workers from other communities. In communities such as Agawam, Amherst, Ludlow, and Westfield, the number of workers living there were larger than the number of jobs – indicating that these communities must export workers to other communities.

However, the total employment in Springfield, Holyoke, Chicopee and West Springfield in 2012 exceeded the number of workers living in those cities in the same year; therefore, those regional employment centers are attracting workers from other cities and towns in the region. The high unemployment rate for residents of these communities suggests that there is a skills mismatch between the residents and the needs of employers in these communities.

Figure 20: Labor Force by Place of Residence, 2012

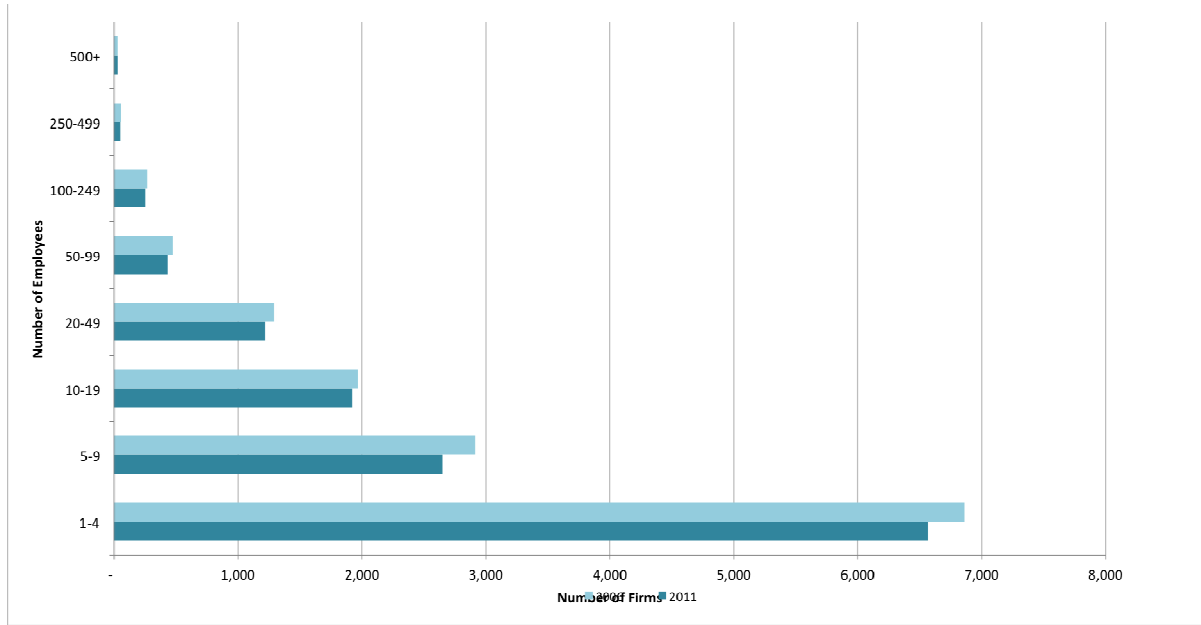


source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, 2012

Regional Employers

The Pioneer Valley region's economy is rooted in small businesses. About 94% of businesses in 2006 and 2011 were firms of fewer than 50 employees (Figure 21), and approximately 70% of firms had fewer than 10 employees.

Figure 21: Numbers of Employers by Size in the Pioneer Valley Region, 2006 and 2011



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns, 2006 and 2011

The number of firms employing between 100 and 499 people was 297 in 2011 and 25 firms had more than 500 employees in 2011 (Table 12).). Among the region's largest employers are Baystate Health, Sisters of Providence Health System, Cooley Dickinson Hospital, and Holyoke Medical Center. These large health service sector employers are located in three of the region's top employment centers (Table 11), Springfield, Holyoke, and Northampton. In addition, seven of the region's colleges and universities are also major employers, and some of the largest employers in the region are firms with national name recognition, such as Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Co., Hasbro Games, and Solutia, Inc., a subsidiary of Eastman Chemical.

For more detailed information and analysis of employment and major employers in the region, please see the 2008 Major Employers for the Pioneer Valley Region report, available on the [PVPC website](#).

For extensive analysis of the businesses that are growing in the region, please see the Pioneer Valley Growth Business Study completed in 2013. The full study and executive summary are also available on the PVPC website.

Table 12: Major Employers in the Pioneer Valley Region in 2013

Company	Location	Primary Industry Code
5,000 to 10,000 Local Employees		
Baystate Health	Springfield	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
University of Massachusetts	Amherst	Colleges, Universities, and Public Schools
1,000 to 4,999 Local Employees		
C & S Wholesale Grocers Inc	Hatfield	Grocery and Related Product Merchant Wholesalers
Cooley Dickinson Hospital	Northampton	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
Hampden Cnty House-Correction	Ludlow	Executive, Legislative, and Other General Government Support
Holyoke Medical Ctr	Holyoke	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
Holyoke Senior High School	Holyoke	Elementary and Secondary Schools
Massachusetts Mutual Life Ins	Springfield	Agencies, Brokerages, and Other Insurance Related Activities
Mercy Medical Ctr	Springfield	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
OMG Inc	Agawam	Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services
ServiceNet	Northampton	Offices of Misc Health Practitioners
Sisters of Providence Health	Holyoke	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
Center for Human Development	Springfield	Other Social Advocacy Organizations
Smith College	Northampton	Colleges, Universities, and Public Schools
US Post Office Bulk Mail Ctr	Springfield	Postal Service
Weldon Rehabilitation Hospital	Springfield	Vocational Rehabilitation Services
500 to 999 Local Employees		
Agawam Public Schools	Agawam	Elementary and Secondary Schools
Amherst College	Amherst	Colleges, Universities, and Public Schools
Amica Insurance	Holyoke	Agencies, Brokerages, and Other Insurance Related Activities
Behavioral Health Network	Springfield	Psychiatric & Substance Abuse Hospitals
Big Y Foods Inc	Springfield	Grocery Stores
Chicopee City Hall	Chicopee	Executive, Legislative, and Other General Government Support
Clinical and Support Options	Northampton	Other Individual and Family Services
Commonwealth of Massachusetts Trial Courts	Springfield	Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services
Gandara Mental Health Center, Inc	Springfield	Outpatient Mental Health and Substance Abuse Centers
Hasbro Games	East Longmeadow	Other Miscellaneous Manufacturing
Holyoke Community College	Holyoke	Junior Colleges
J Polep Distribution	Chicopee	Grocery and Related Product Merchant Wholesalers
Mt Holyoke College	South Hadley	Colleges, Universities, and Public Schools
Noble Hospital	Westfield	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
Northeast Utilities	West Springfield	Utility System Construction
Republican	Springfield	Newspaper, Periodical, Book, and Directory Publishers
Six Flags	Agawam	Entertainment
Solutia Inc., a Subsidiary of Eastman Chemical	Springfield	Chemical and Plastics Manufacturing
Springfield College	Springfield	Colleges, Universities, and Public Schools
Springfield Police Dept	Springfield	Justice, Public Order, and Safety Activities
Springfield Wire	Springfield	Ventilation, Heating, Air-Conditioning, and Commercial Refrigeration Equipment Manufacturing
Turbo Care Inc	Chicopee	Miscellaneous Durable Goods Merchant Wholesalers
US Post Office	Springfield	Postal Service
US Veterans Medical Center	Northampton	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals

500 to 999 Local Employees (Continued)		
Western New England University	Springfield	Colleges, Universities, and Public Schools
Westfield State University	Westfield	Colleges, Universities, and Public Schools
Wing Memorial Hospital	Palmer	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals

Source: MA Department of Labor & Workforce Development

The Infrastructure

Real Estate

Housing

Where homes have been built and will continue to get built as well as the type and characteristic of our housing is a reflection of land use policies, the strength or weakness of the housing market, mortgage lending practices, housing discrimination, transportation networks, topography, and public infrastructure. Our settlement patterns and built environment are also a reflection of structural issues such as economic security and educational attainment, which taken together, can promote or hinder self-sufficiency, mobility and residents' abilities to obtain and maintain stable housing situations. One who does not need to worry about finding a safe and decent place to live can devote time to other pressing concerns, such as education, employment, personal health and community well-being. Housing is a basic human need and one of the most significant expenditures individuals and families face. This region needs a full range of housing opportunities that are affordable to households of all racial and ethnic backgrounds, abilities, and income ranges to ensure that our region remains economically competitive.

Housing Market

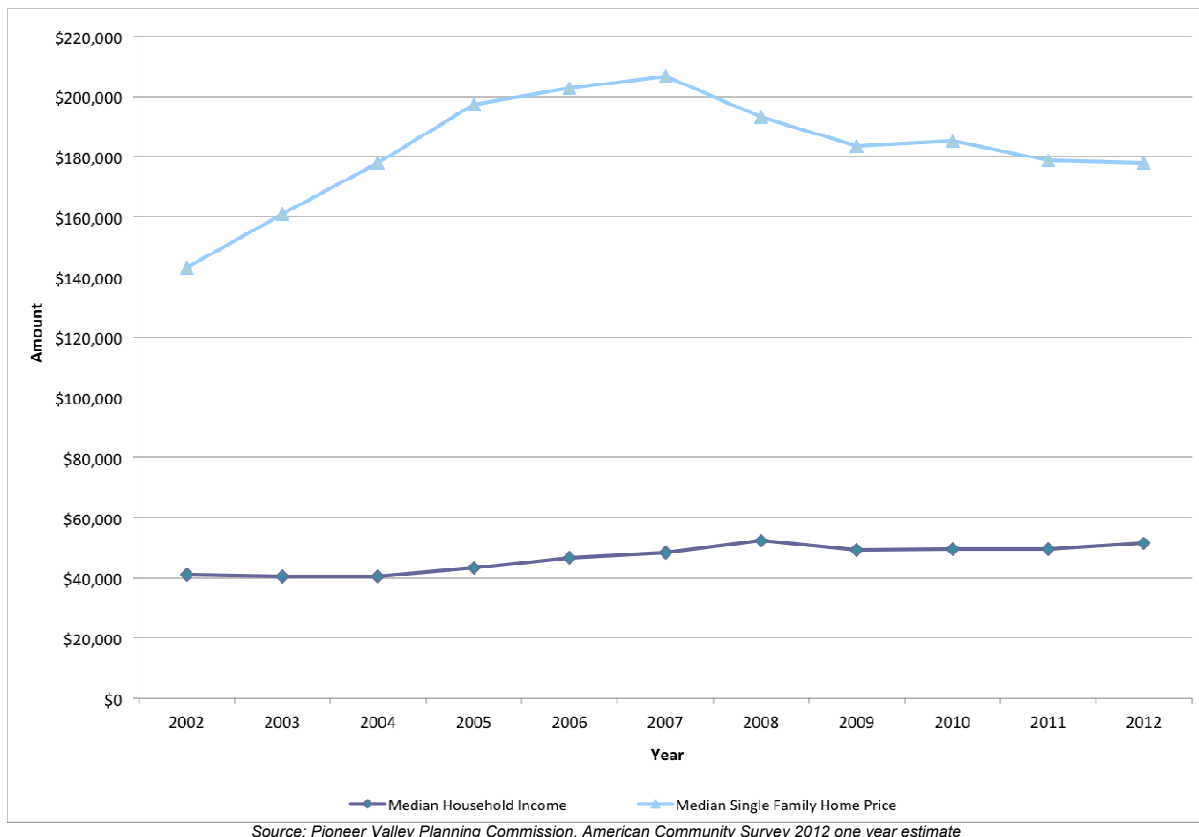
In the 2000s, particularly between 2003 and 2007, housing prices rose dramatically in the region as well as nationwide (Figure 22). Median sale price data through 2012 shows how the recent national economic downturn and housing market crash have impacted the region, with a decrease in median single-family home prices by 14% from 2007 and 2012. Figure 22 also shows how household incomes have not kept pace with increased housing costs. Signaling the possibility of a real shift, however, the 2013 regional median sale price, surpassed the 2009 regional median sale reaching a median sale price of \$191,382 for a single family home.

Our region has strong and weak housing markets which affect the cost housing, the quality of housing, and the demand for housing. Figure 23 demonstrates the significant variation of our region's strong and weak housing markets in the form of single-family home prices. While prices are still not what they were before the beginning of the housing crises in 2007, it is possible that declines are beginning to level off and prices are beginning to turn around. The communities with the strongest housing markets had median sale prices close to \$300,000, including, Amherst, Longmeadow, and Hadley. At the same time, more than half of the communities in the region had prices under \$200,000. The strong market communities tend to be the most desirable communities in the region. Strong demand for homes in these communities is driven by having good schools, low crime rates, and low poverty rates. Housing in these communities tends to have higher sale prices, home values, and higher rents, which has the affect of limiting the potential for a household with more limited economic means from being able to afford to buy or rent in the community.

The communities with weaker housing markets had median sale prices around or below \$150,000, Springfield, Chester, and Middlefield experienced the lowest home prices in the region with Springfield and Chester at \$120,000 and Middlefield at \$68,750. Palmer, Ware, and Goshen also had median sale prices at or below \$150,000 levels in 2013 (Figure 23). Our weak market communities tend to have low property values and high vacancies. The main revitalization challenge facing our central cities are weak housing markets. Low

property values create a disincentive for homeowners and landlords to make capital or maintenance improvements to their properties because the cost of these improvements can be greater than the overall value of the property or does not increase the value of the property. Divestment from low property values has led to vacant or deteriorating housing, which creates neighborhood blight and makes for unsafe living conditions.

Figure 22: Median Household Income and Single-Family Home Prices in the Pioneer Valley Region, 2002-2012

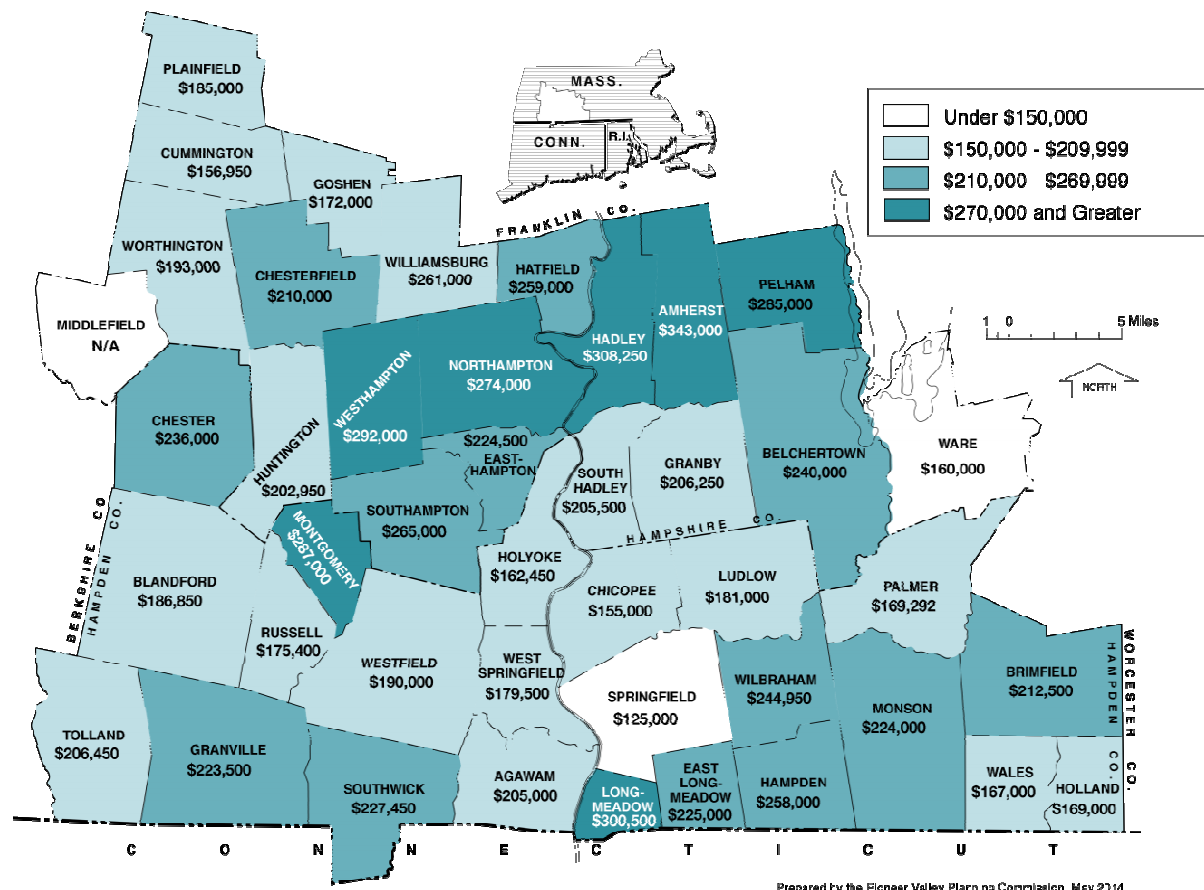


Studies conducted as part of the regional housing plan found that weak market cities and towns in the Pioneer Valley would like to see their communities become desirable places to live—places of choice—and see a greater variety of market rate housing options created in the vacant or underutilized upper story spaces of their downtowns as well as on vacant lots and within underutilized properties that would attract moderate, middle, and upper income households. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there are young professionals, empty-nesters, or two person households who desire to rent apartments or buy condominiums in our cities but are unable to find housing that suits their tastes in areas they find safe and that have ready access to goods and services. However, the depressed housing market makes it financially difficult to develop new housing on infill lots or within existing mill and commercial buildings or renovate existing multi-unit residential buildings for households that would pay market rent. Housing developers point to the problem that current market rents are typically insufficient to support the cost of new construction or significant rehabilitation of multi-unit housing. The limited state or federal public subsidies that exist to help developers fill the financing gap require income-restricted housing as a condition of receipt of these funds. These restrictions are good practice in many instances but can also serve as one more

barrier to attracting an economically diverse population to urban neighborhoods and to increasing home-ownership rates.

A weak housing market can exist in spite of an unmet need for housing that is affordable to residents in that community. A key reason for this disparity is the very low incomes of residents in our weak market cities and towns. There is tremendous demand for existing affordable housing units, and these programs all maintain waiting lists. The strong demand for affordable housing units and lack of sufficient supply of these units is a statewide issue.

Figure 23: Median Sale Price of Single-Family Homes in the Pioneer Valley Region (2013)



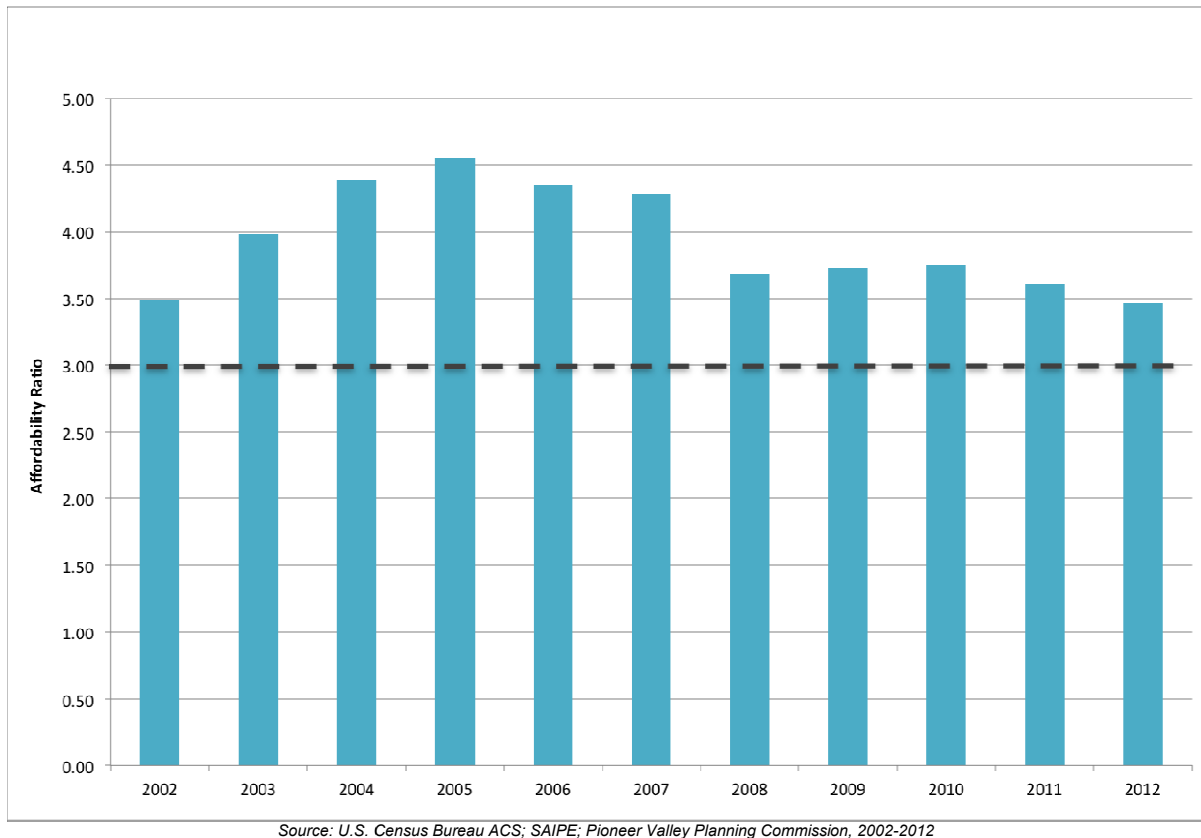
Source: The Warren Group 2013

Housing Affordability

Recent declines in housing prices have not solved the issue of housing affordability, as incomes have decreased when inflation is factored in. It is generally accepted that a household can afford a home up to a price that is equal to three times the household yearly income. Households who pay more than this for a home are considered “cost-burdened” and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care as well as saving for their future and that of their families. Considering the median household income in the Pioneer Valley in 2012 was \$51,381, that translates into approximately \$154,000 of purchasing power for a home. Only nine out of forty-three communities in the region had median housing prices equal to or less than that amount in 2013. This is an increase from the four communities with affordable housing in 2009, which may suggest the beginnings of favorable housing prices in the area. Springfield and Holyoke

have many homes available for under \$150,000 and are actively promoting their affordable home-ownership opportunities through programs such as “Buy Springfield Now” and “Buy Holyoke Now” as a way to attract first-time homebuyers into their cities. At the same time, several communities such as Longmeadow, Pelham, and Amherst have remained consistently unaffordable to households that earn below the region’s median household income.

Figure 24: Pioneer Valley Region Housing Affordability Ratio (Median Price/Median Income), 2002-2012



Another way to examine the problem is through the use of a housing affordability ratio (See Figure 24). The Pioneer Valley’s housing affordability ratio can be calculated by dividing the median price of a single family home by the median household income. Therefore an affordability ratio above 3.0 is of concern because it means that, statistically, a household with the median income in the region cannot afford a single family home at the median price. The affordability ratio steadily climbed starting in 1997, and passed the 3.0 threshold in 2001. However, the most recent data shows a decrease in the affordability ratio (from 4.3 in 2007 to 3.5 in 2012). This is an indication that the drop in housing prices has been significant enough to compensate for some of the concurrent decrease in incomes. Despite the steady decrease in the affordability ratio since 2007, a ratio of 3.5 is still of concern. In the long term the issue of housing affordability will continue to be very important, especially if incomes continue to decrease or if housing prices return to higher levels once the economy recovers.

Transportation

Vehicle Roadways

The Pioneer Valley area is considered the crossroads of transportation in western Massachusetts. Situated at the intersection of the area's major highways, Interstate 90 (Massachusetts Turnpike) traveling east-west and Interstate 91 traveling north-south, the region offers easy access to all markets in the eastern United States and Canada. Major southern New England population centers are accessible within hours.

The interstate expressways (I-90 and I-91) link most of the major urban centers in the region. The basic highway network, including interstate highways, U.S. numbered routes, state routes, and other traffic arteries, provides access to all municipalities in the region, both urban and rural. The pattern of principal arterial highways in the region is radial, extending outwards from each of the region's major centers, a consequence of development and topographic influences.

Of the existing transportation facilities in the Pioneer Valley region, major bridge crossings remain a focal point of regional transportation concerns, as many streets and highways converge into a limited number of crossings over the Connecticut, Westfield, and Chicopee rivers.

Table 13: Driving Distances and Times from Springfield to Select Urban Centers

Destination	Distance in Miles	Estimated Driving Time
Albany	85	1.5 hours
Boston	91	1.5 hours
Montreal	301	5.5 hours
New York City	140	3.0 hours
Philadelphia	260	5.0 hours
Washington, DC	400	8.0 hours

Source: PVPC, Regional Transportation Plan for the Pioneer Valley – 2007 Update

Table 14: Major Interstate Highways Serving the Pioneer Valley Region

Interstate Highway	Principle Orientation	Number of Interchanges in the Region	Road Mileage in the Region	Toll Road?
I-90	East/West	6	46.08	Yes
I-91	North/South	22	31.17	No
I-291	Connector (Springfield to I-90)	6	5.44	No
I-391	Connector (I-91 to Chicopee/Holyoke)	6	3.82	No

Source: PVPC, Regional Transportation Plan for the Pioneer Valley – 2000 Update

In general, traffic on the region's roadways has been increasing. Between 1999 and 2009 the estimated number of daily vehicle miles traveled (DVMT) in the Pioneer Valley region rose about nearly half of a million miles per day, from about 14.76 million to about 15.23 million. The magnitude of increase is shared in the region's rural areas. Table 16 presents the commute times for each of the Pioneer Valley communities in 2000 and 2012. The 3.8% increase in commuter times can be attributed to several major trends including a rise in vehicle ownership and the onset of several major roadway improvement projects, such as the Great River Bridge in Westfield.

Table 15: Pioneer Valley Region Average Commute Times to Work

	Mean Driving Time to Work (minutes)		
	2000	2008-2012	% Change
Massachusetts	27	27.7	2.6%
Pioneer Valley Region	21.8	22.6	3.8%
Hampden County	21.8	22.4	2.8%
Hampshire County	21.9	23.2	5.9%
Agawam	20.5	20.9	2.0%
Amherst	18	19.4	7.8%
Belchertown	28.1	27.9	-0.7%
Blandford	37.5	31.3	-16.5%
Brimfield	30.1	33.3	10.6%
Chester	38.9	35.8	-8.0%
Chesterfield	29.4	33.1	12.6%
Chicopee	19.3	21	8.8%
Cummington	38.3	33	-13.8%
East Longmeadow	21.9	22.1	0.9%
Easthampton	21.1	22.2	5.2%
Goshen	31	32.3	4.2%
Granby	20.6	26.1	26.7%
Granville	29.5	30.2	2.4%
Hadley	21.9	19	-13.2%
Hampden	26.4	25.5	-3.4%
Hatfield	20.9	22.9	9.6%
Holland	34.2	34.3	0.3%
Holyoke	18.6	20.2	8.6%
Huntington	34.4	33.7	-2.0%
Longmeadow	20.3	21	3.4%
Ludlow	21.3	22.2	4.2%
Middlefield	41.6	38.4	-7.7%
Monson	29.5	31.5	6.8%
Montgomery	29.7	32.8	10.4%
Northampton	20	20.7	3.5%
Palmer	22.9	26.1	14.0%
Pelham	22.3	23.9	7.2%
Plainfield	33.5	36.9	10.1%
Russell	28.1	32.1	14.2%
South Hadley	19.4	20.8	7.2%
Southampton	24.8	25.7	3.6%
Southwick	26.4	24.1	-8.7%
Springfield	21.5	21.4	-0.5%
Tolland	39.4	31.9	-19.0%
Wales	36.7	38.1	3.8%
Ware	25.8	30.4	17.8%
West Springfield	20.9	19.4	-7.2%
Westfield	22.6	23.4	3.5%
Westhampton	25.2	29.7	17.9%
Wilbraham	24.3	23.8	-2.1%
Williamsburg	23.3	23.4	0.4%
Worthington	40.5	38.1	-5.9%

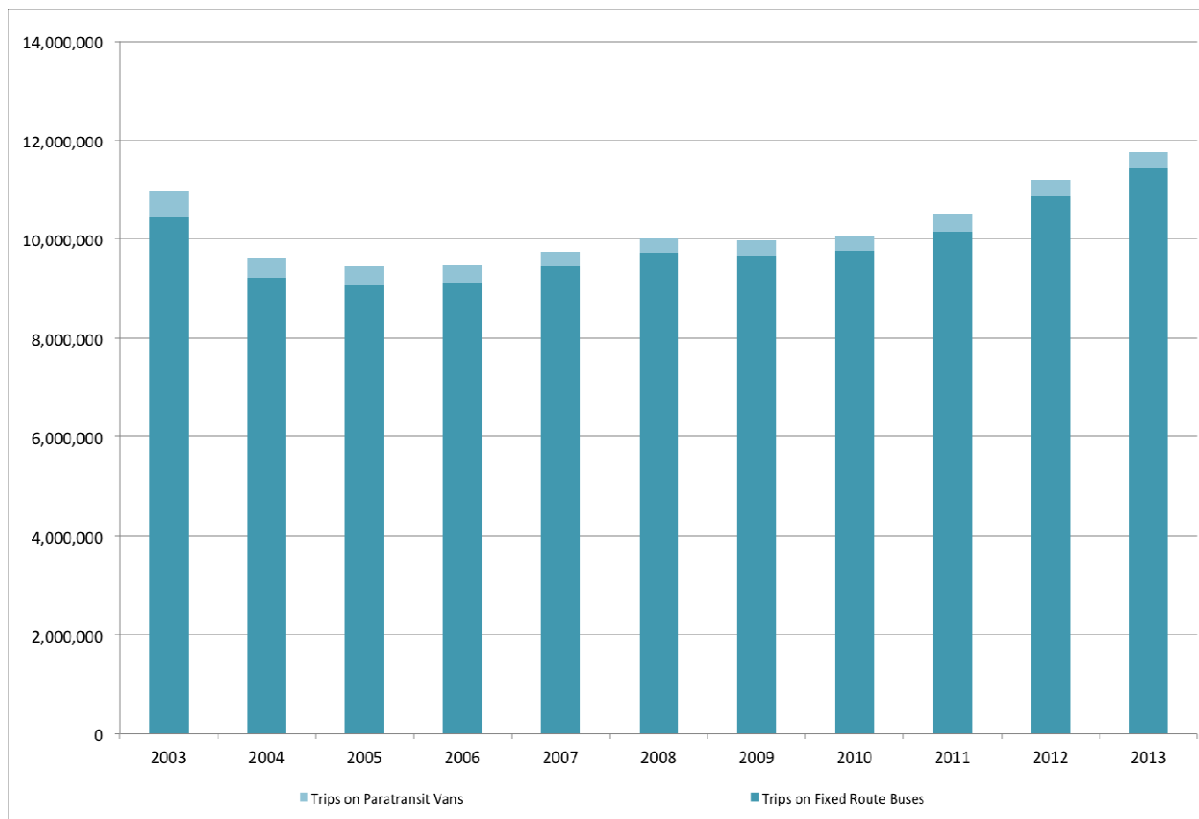
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census and 2008-12 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Transit Routes

The Pioneer Valley has a well-developed public transit system that includes local bus service, ADA and senior paratransit van service, intercity bus service, and passenger rail. In addition, there are formal and informal park-and-ride lots, as well as ridesharing and car rental services that offer more options for accessing and leveraging transit services. New passenger rail services and facilities are now in the planning and construction processes, which will greatly enhance transit capacity in the region. All of these elements are vital contributors to mobility options for the region's residents.

The Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA), established in 1974 is the largest of the Commonwealth's 14 regional transit authorities. A total of 24 municipalities are members of the PVTA service area. PVTA oversees the operation of 174 buses and 135 vans throughout Hampden and Hampshire Counties, as well as two municipalities in Franklin County. The PVTA system has 43 scheduled bus routes that provide service in urban centers, as well as outlying suburban and rural areas.

Figure 25: Pioneer Valley Transit Authority System Wide Annual Bus and Van Trips 2002-2012



Source: PVTA Annual Reports

Fourteen towns in the PVPC region (which are not members of PVTA) contract with the Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) based in Greenfield, for senior paratransit service. These towns are: Blandford, Chester, Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, Plainfield, Russell, Southampton, Southwick, Westhampton, and Worthington.

Intercity bus service in the region is provided by Peter Pan Bus Lines, Greyhound Lines and Megabus. These companies operate a mix of routes to destinations within the region, as well as connections throughout New England and the country. Other private bus carriers provide charters and package tours.

The regional transit system includes the following bus terminals and hubs:

- Springfield Bus Terminal is the major bus station in western Massachusetts, serving as the hub for 22 PVTA Springfield-area routes, Peter Pan regional service, and Greyhound regional routes.
- Holyoke Transportation Center is the hub for 6 PVTA routes, as well as limited service by Peter Pan.
- Northampton Bus Terminal is served by Peter Pan and Greyhound, with connections to 8 PVTA and FRTA routes at the nearby Academy of Music stop.
- Amherst, PVTA and Peter Pan service is available at the UMass Haigis Mall and Amherst Town Common. Megabus "Amherst" service stops only at the Hampshire Mall in Hadley.

Passenger rail stations for Amtrak service at the Springfield Depot (Lyman Street) and the Amherst Depot (Railroad Street). Service to the Amherst Station will be replaced by service to Northampton in late 2014. Amtrak's most frequent service is at Springfield Station, where 11 trains per day are available to and from Springfield that provide extensive service within the Northeast. Passenger rail service is provided on both east-west (Lake Shore Limited) and north-south (Vermont) routes through the region.

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation is now in the process of realigning Amtrak Vermont service north of Springfield to restore passenger rail service to the Connecticut River line through Holyoke, Northampton and Greenfield. Service to Amherst is currently provided by a PVTA bus connection. This project is funded by a \$70 million dollar grant provided in part by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail Program under the Federal Railroad Administration. Service is expected to move from the current alignment (through Amherst) to this new alignment by the end of 2014.

In addition, the Connecticut Department of Transportation's New Haven-Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) commuter rail project is underway, which will nearly double north/south passenger rail capacity at the Springfield terminal. The first trains on this service are expected in 2016.

Commercial van shuttles serve an important segment of the region's transit market. Many operators focus on service to and from airports and rail stations in New England. Service to Bradley International is provided hourly from most locations the Pioneer Valley. Service to Boston, Providence, and New York is also provided, though not on a scheduled basis. Non-profit organizations also operate shuttles, typically for their clients.

Examples include municipal councils on aging, day care providers and social service agencies.

There are more than 20 taxi companies operating in the region. Taxi companies provide a vital link in the transportation system by offering mobility during times and at locations when public transportation is not available.

Non-Motorized Transportation

Bicycling and walking are popular transportation options in the Pioneer Valley. Historic town centers, vibrant central business districts and a variety of destinations are within easy walking or bicycling distance from many residential neighborhoods. An expanding network of bikeways, sidewalks, and accommodating roadways provide residents with a variety of transportation alternatives. Many of the region's downtowns including Springfield, Holyoke, Northampton, and Amherst, offer easy accessibility to pedestrians and are supported by a strong transit network.

To support the increasing number of people who walk and bike, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission has developed a strategic plan of policy-related actions and physical projects in which municipal and regional officials along with citizens and nonprofit organizations can collaborate on to improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists in the Pioneer Valley. The plan includes information and recommendations for incorporating bicycle and pedestrian features into the design phase of road reconstruction projects, using zoning and community development tools to foster environments that support bicycling and walking, increasing bicycle and pedestrian safety through design enhancements, and promoting bicycling and pedestrian through "Complete Street" policy initiatives.

Recently the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority expanded its "Rack and Roll" bikes-on-buses program to the entire region. Now all fixed route buses in the PVTA fleet are equipped with frequently used racks, allowing cyclists to transport their bikes on public service transit lines throughout Hampden and Hampshire Counties.

Through the Pioneer Valley "Share the Road," program the PVPC has worked jointly with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) on the installation 380 bike related signs including "Share the Road" signs, "Bike Route" signs, "Connecticut River Walk" signs, as well as directional signs. The Pioneer Valley Share the Road Program also produced an educational video and public service announcement that was distributed through local cable access channels and via the internet.

The region has an ever expanding network of off-road facilities ranging from traditional bike paths to multi-use trails or linear parks. The PVPC assisted local municipalities on the installation of more than 300 bicycle parking racks throughout the region's urban cores with the capacity to secure more than 900 bicycles. The PVPC also produced a series of instructional bike-rack installation videos to assist communities and nonprofit organizations which are available at the PVPC's video hosting site:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/PVPCgroup>. Currently sixteen communities provide 80 miles of bicycle lanes, multi-use paths or "rail trails" in the region, while several communities have similar projects in the design phase. In addition, the Pioneer Valley communities are active participants in "Baystate Bike Week" with dozens of activities hosted during the third week of May each year (<http://baystatebikeweek.org/>).

The Norwottuck Rail Trail is one example of the region's commitment to bicycling and walking. The ten-mile Norwottuck Trail links together the communities of Northampton, Hadley, Amherst, and Belchertown, and facilitates travel to and from educational institutions, downtown commercial areas, major employment centers and residential neighborhoods. Weekend traffic counts show an average of 1,200 people per day utilize the Trail during the peak season which includes when local colleges and the University of Massachusetts,

Amherst are in session. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) started a reconstruction project for the Norwottuck Rail Trail in 2013. The reconstructed path will be wider in most places, incorporate improved access for the disabled, and re-decked bridges. (More information available at www.mass.gov/dcr/projects/norwottuck/index.htm).

Many communities in the Pioneer Valley have begun to address pedestrian safety and health related issues through the initiation of “Safe Routes to School Programs.” Safe Routes to School (SRTS) promotes healthy alternatives for children and parents in their travel to and from school. The program educates students, parents and community members on the value of walking and bicycling and provides funding for sidewalks, crosswalks, and traffic calming measures. In 2014 ten of the Region’s 43 cities and towns had schools enrolled in the SRTS program including Amherst, Hadley, Holyoke, Longmeadow, Northampton, Palmer, Southampton, South Hadley, Springfield and Westfield.

Transportation of Goods

The Pioneer Valley region is strategically located at a geographic crossroads in which more than one-third of the total population of the United States can be reached by overnight delivery. The region is also well positioned to support new ventures in international trade, especially in Canadian and European markets. An efficient multi-modal transportation network includes truck, rail, air and pipeline.

Trucking is the dominant mode for moving freight in the Pioneer Valley. This mode carries over 91% of all freight in the region. This regional percentage share is slightly higher than the state, which on average transports 86% of freight by truck. Urbanized communities in the region have at least one trucking firm, the majority of these carriers are small, short haul carriers handling feeder and distribution traffic. They provide both full truckload and less than truckload deliveries. This mode has the ability to transport goods to the northeastern United States and southeastern parts of Canada by overnight service. These freight companies carry goods for a variety of industries outside Hampden and Hampshire County. Franklin County possesses few freight companies and often employ/hire Hampden and Hampshire based trucking companies to transport their goods. Essentially, this transportation service sector is exported to other areas, in turn producing regional income. The future competitiveness of the industry hinges on the investment in the maintenance and development of interstate, state and local roadways, multimodal facilities and all related infrastructure as truck traffic is expected to grow throughout the state over the next twenty years.

Five rail carriers provide freight service in the Pioneer Valley Region: CSX Transportation, Pan AM Southern, New England Central, Pioneer Valley Railroad, and MassCentral Railroad. The region’s largest freight and intermodal yard, operated by CSX, is located in West Springfield. Another major freight and switching yard important to the region is B&M’s North Deerfield Yard, located in neighboring Franklin County to the north. Within the Pioneer Valley, other smaller freight yards are located in Holyoke, Palmer, and Westfield. The geographic location of the Pioneer Valley at the crossroads of interstate highways 90 and 91 and long-haul rail lines (CSX and B&M) creates a strategic and attractive location for businesses and industries participating in local and international marketplaces.

In addition, air freight and package express services are readily available in the Pioneer Valley region. Predominantly, air freight is moved through either Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks, Connecticut; Logan Airport in Boston; or New York City's metropolitan airports. Air freight is also handled at Westover Airport in Chicopee. None of the other airports located within the region's boundaries offer air cargo services at this time.

Political Infrastructure

The area's elected state and federal officials also support the economic development efforts of the Pioneer Valley region. The following maps illustrate the current political landscape. Redistricting boundaries adopted in November 2011 took effect in January 2013, and the U.S. congressional districts in Massachusetts were reduced from ten districts to nine, as a result of population shifts documented by the 2010 census.

Figure 26: Pioneer Valley Region State Representatives and Districts

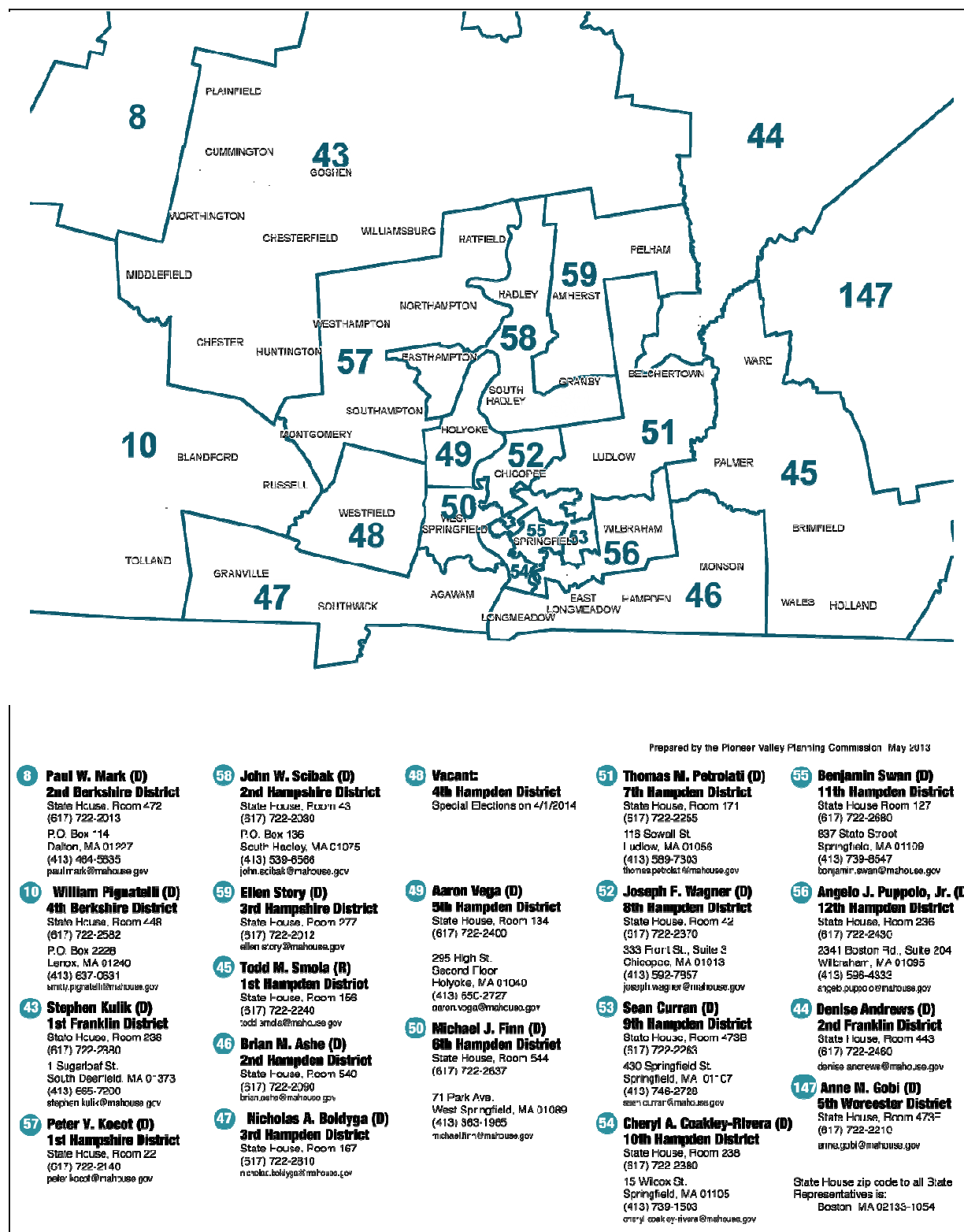
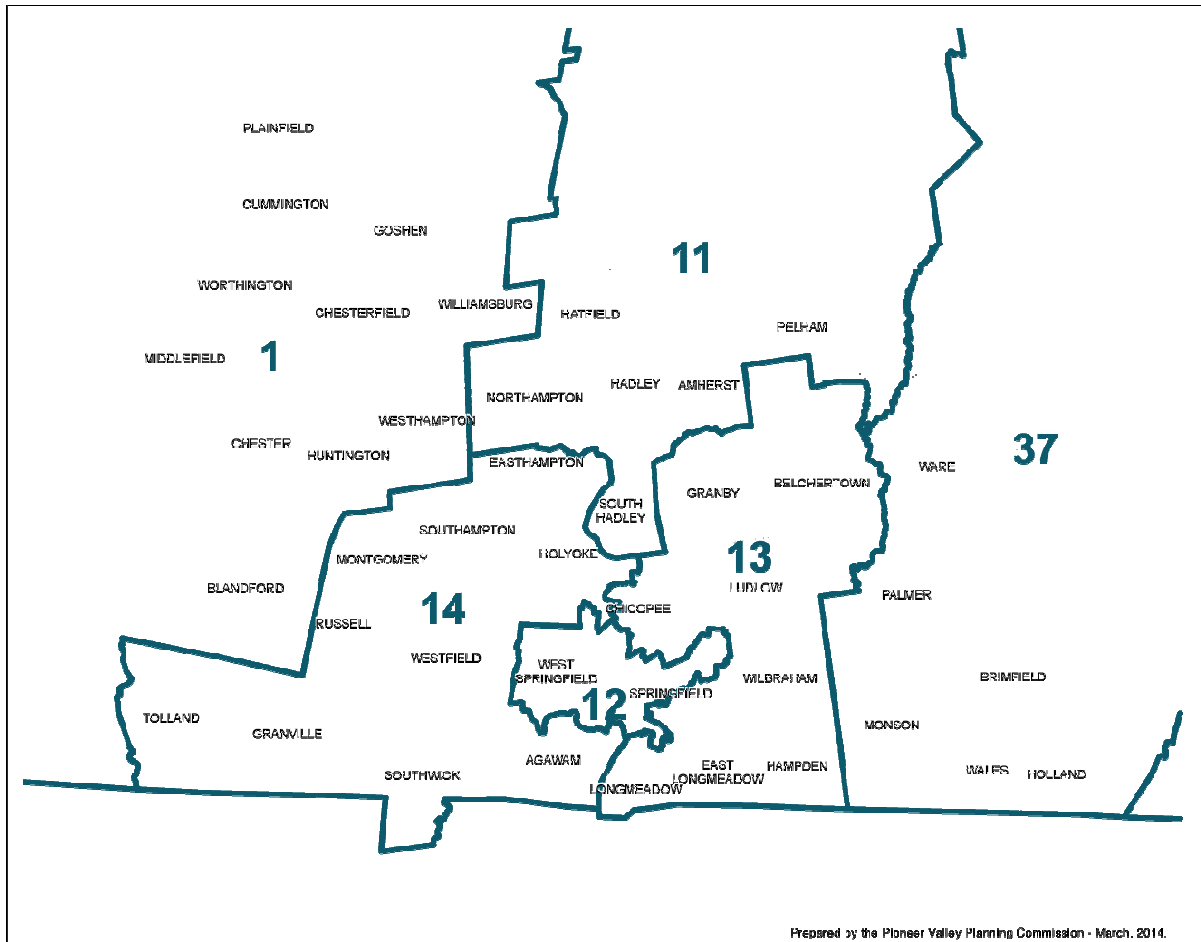


Figure 27: Pioneer Valley Region State Senators and Districts



Prepared by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission - March, 2014.

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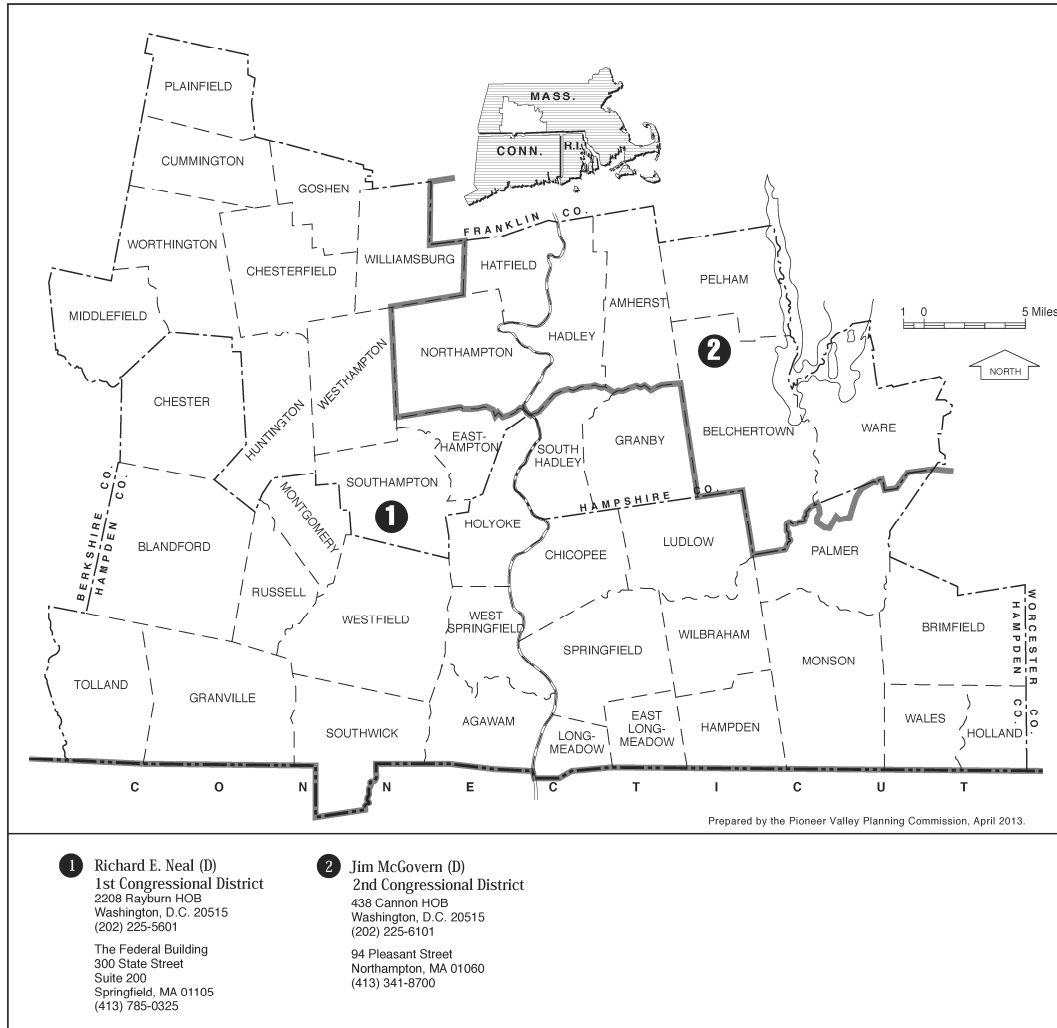
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Figure 28: Pioneer Valley Region Congressional Districts & Senate Contacts



Assessment of Economic Development Conditions

Weaknesses & External Threats

Over the past decade, a number of issues have threatened to adversely affect the Pioneer Valley region's economy, quality of life, and prosperity. In many cases the region has made progress in addressing them; however, they continue to pose obstacles to the region's growth and therefore must be resolved. Many of these conditions result from the loss of major industrial-era employers, while others relate to more recent economic trends. Fifteen significant areas of concern that remain in 2014 are identified below:

- Job losses and high unemployment stemming from the "Great Recession" of 2008-2009 and the slow recovery
- Very modest population growth, especially in the Pioneer Valley's urban core cities of Springfield, Holyoke, and Chicopee
- Shortage of skilled workers – currently and projected to increase
- Limited inventory of industrial land with essential infrastructure services readily available across the region
- Lagging exports in an increasingly global economy
- Poverty rate increases in the Pioneer Valley region and extremely high poverty rates in the urban core cities of Springfield, Holyoke, and Chicopee
- Uneven K-12 public schools and performance
- Continuing home foreclosures as fall-out from the nationwide mortgage crisis, particularly in Springfield
- Out-migration of local college and university graduates to other regions
- Severely limited state funding for continued infrastructure improvements, including highway, bridge, transit, and rail projects, and for costly environmental cleanup projects such as Connecticut River CSOs
- Ongoing recovery from a series of natural disasters in 2011, particularly the tornado and Tropical Storm Irene
- Cities and towns struggling with funding local needs and services due to state budget deficits and modest local aid increases
- Gaps still to be filled in the availability and affordability of high-speed broadband Internet and telecommunication infrastructure
- Land use practices that foster low-density development and create sprawl

- Relatively high energy costs and the perception of hurdles to achieve energy efficiency savings

Many of these are being addressed by the implementers of the Plan for Progress goals and strategies, and major accomplishments are described later in this report. Long-term solutions will require long-term commitment and collaboration, as well as leveraging of the region's numerous strengths.

Competitive Advantages

Despite the threats described above, the Pioneer Valley region possesses numerous competitive advantages, which must be drawn upon fully so that the economic development goals of the region can be reached. Significant regional advantages of the Pioneer Valley include:

An Exceptional Quality of Life

The Pioneer Valley has an extraordinarily high quality of life, with its intrinsic natural beauty, wide variety of cultural amenities, and countless outdoor recreational opportunities. Its communities are located along the Connecticut River – a designated American Heritage River – in a diverse landscape of historic urban centers, college towns, and scenic rural areas. It is a highly desirable place for individuals and families to live – and therefore for businesses to locate.

A Strategic and Highly Accessible Location

The Pioneer Valley region is centrally located in the Knowledge Corridor, an important bi-state economic region with easy access to the Boston, New York City, and Albany metropolitan centers. The Knowledge Corridor benefits from its excellent transportation access afforded by highway, rail, and aviation facilities, thereby giving the region a major advantage in moving both people and freight and being a freight distribution hub for New England and the Northeast.

A History of Innovation and Pioneering Technologies

The Pioneer Valley region has a rich history of developing new methods and business technologies dating from the early 1600s: construction of America's first armory; construction of the country's first commercial canal; creation of the first automobile, the Pullman rail car, vulcanized rubber, and the motorcycle; and introduction of the first commercial radio and UHF television stations.

A Center of Education Excellence

The Pioneer Valley region has one of the most skilled and highly educated workforces in the world, a fact which has resulted in its designation as part of New England's Knowledge Corridor. The region's 14 prestigious colleges and universities (located throughout all three Pioneer Valley counties) are home to approximately 65,000 undergraduate and 12,000 graduate students each year.

A Responsive Job Training and Retention Infrastructure

The Pioneer Valley region has two outstanding Regional Employment Boards (REBs) that oversee in excess of \$15 million in combined public and private investments, yielding a state-of-the-art workforce development system, two award-winning and nationally recognized one-stop career centers, and an interstate working partnership that encompasses three REBs that serve the Knowledge Corridor along with the Capitol Region of Connecticut.

A Telecommunications Hub for New England

Geographically located at the crossroads of New England, the Pioneer Valley region boasts a connecting point in Springfield, linking major fiber optic lines running both north-south and east-west, and serving as the primary telecommunication access hub for eight states.

An Entrepreneurial Focus and Resource Centers

In the last two decades, the Pioneer Valley region has undergone a profound shift as the number of very large employers has diminished and the importance of small businesses has grown. There is also a rich tradition of social entrepreneurship in the region. In response to these trends, the system of entrepreneurial support services has expanded and includes the Massachusetts Small Business Development Center, the Business Growth Center at Springfield Technology Park, SCORE, Valley Venture Mentors, Common Capital, the UMass Family Business Center and local Community Development Corporations.

A Proactive and Evolving Regional Technology Networking Structure

Technology companies are linked with the area's universities and colleges in a number of ventures, including a precision machining initiative and the development of clean energy resources, to increase the pace of innovation and technology commercialization and to build a growth-oriented economy in the Pioneer Valley region and throughout western Massachusetts.

Other Strengths & Opportunities

A significant opportunity for economic development arose for the region over the past two years, while also raising some concerns for communities, with the MGM Resorts International casino proposal in downtown Springfield. At the time of this report, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court had just ruled that a question should be allowed on the November 2014 ballot asking voters if the state's 2011 casino law should be repealed. Thus, all casino licenses in the state are in uncertain status until that time.

When the state of Massachusetts passed the 2011 Expanded Gaming Act, it opened the door for up to three destination resort casinos and one slots parlor to be located in the Commonwealth. The resort casinos were to be located in diverse geographical regions, with one in western Massachusetts, and they must be approved by a majority vote in the local municipality. It was required that agreements are developed and signed with the host as well as surrounding impacted communities.

The Massachusetts Gaming Commission, with five members, was established to oversee the application and licensing process, and over the past two years, a complex process has unfolded that whittled down a large group of contenders across the state and resulted in just one final proposal in western Massachusetts – MGM Springfield. Initially, two applicants had proposed sites within the City of Springfield (Penn National Gaming for a site in the North End and MGM in the South End), but in early May 2013, the City of Springfield chose to sign an agreement with MGM, pending approval by the Gaming Commission and city voters. In West Springfield, Hard Rock International submitted an application, and Mohegan Sun proposed a Palmer facility. Of the other proposed casinos in the state, two remain: Wynn MA in Everett and Mohegan Sun in Revere, and one slots parlor has already been licensed in the town of Plainridge as an addition to the Plainridge Racecourse.

The prospect of a resort casino located in downtown Springfield brings many potential benefits: permanent job creation of up to 2-3,000 positions, 2,000 temporary jobs, increased visitors and tourism, increased tax revenues, and numerous community initiatives and partnerships sponsored by the international casino giants. On the other hand, concerns have arisen about the impact of easy access to gambling, the potential for increased crime, the certainty of increased traffic, and possible loss of business for existing local venues. The process created by the state, and being carefully followed and managed by numerous regional and local entities, is intended to identify and minimize those impacts while creating the greatest possible benefits. Regular open meetings are being held by the Gaming Commission – see www.massgaming.com for more details and up-to-date information.

The region has many other assets and strengths that attract outside investment and talent – the following are just 12 of the other significant areas of opportunity for the Pioneer Valley region to leverage:

- A proactive and collaborative planning process – and implementation mindset – capable of producing positive and measurable results
- An evolving Hartford-Springfield economic partnership that has spawned the Knowledge Corridor brand, InternHere.com program, Sustainable Communities Initiative, and a cross-border Growth Business Study, as well as the new 2014 Plan for Progress Talent Development Strategy.
- An expanding and diverse workforce fueled by immigration, life-style options, and growing efforts to retain college graduates
- A high level of worker productivity, especially in the manufacturing sector
- Downtown Springfield revitalization efforts, most recently the establishment of a UMass satellite center in Tower Square, the MGM casino resort proposal, and Union Station redevelopment.
- The establishment of the Massachusetts Green High Performing Computing Center in downtown Holyoke, along with a new Holyoke Innovation District and a set of local and regional innovation strategies to leverage these resources.

- Housing affordability, especially as compared to the Greater Boston area
- A long and growing list of recreational and cultural assets that underpin tourism and the travel industry
- Federal funding to upgrade and increase passenger rail service to the region
- Superior medical facilities, personnel, services, training, and research, recently enhanced by the construction of the new Baystate “Hospital of the Future” in Springfield.
- The region’s ability to encourage, nurture, and provide technical and financial support to new start-up firms across the Pioneer Valley
- State and federal funding to expand broadband access in underserved and unserved areas

Analysis of the Region’s Economic Clusters

Economic clusters are geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, service providers, and associated institutions in a particular field. The Pioneer Valley is home to several well-developed clusters, and is also connected to world-leading industry clusters centered in the Boston area. Cluster development initiatives are an important new direction in economic policy and include efforts such as supply-chain development, market intelligence, incubator services, attraction of foreign direct investment, management training, workforce training, joint R&D projects, marketing of the region, and setting technical standards.

The following information on the region’s most significant clusters has been provided by the Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts (EDC), which has been working closely with these businesses to identify opportunities as well as issues of concern. The data reflects all of Western Massachusetts, including Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin and Berkshire Counties. Additional information is available on their website at www.westernmassedc.com. In addition, the Holyoke Innovation District Design and Development Task Force worked with consultant HDR to identify key clusters in the region, and a final report is available at www.innovateholyokey.com.

Supplementing this is information from an analysis prepared by America 2050 and the Regional Plan Association for the Knowledge Corridor, the region encompassing the Pioneer Valley of Massachusetts and the Greater Hartford area in Connecticut. This report calculated a “location quotient” (LQ), or relative concentration, of various knowledge industries in the region, based on employment. An LQ of “1” indicates that an industry has a similar proportion of employment in that industry compared to most other regions in the U.S., while an LQ higher than “1” indicates a higher concentration of that industry. Where available, the location quotient is given for each cluster.

Based on these sources, important clusters in the region include: advanced manufacturing, digital technologies, health and biomedical, energy and clean technology, and the creative economy. In services, the region is strong in financial services, logistics and distribution, and tourism sectors. The following section describes each industry cluster.

Health and Biomedical

More than 50,000 workers, nine hospitals, and 100 clinics or related facilities make healthcare the largest private industry in Western Massachusetts and a leading economic driver for the region. Area hospitals are research-driven centers for cutting-edge medical technology, advanced education, and renowned care. Baystate Health, the parent organization of Baystate Medical Center, is a four-campus, 800-bed teaching and research facility, as well as the western campus of Tufts University School of Medicine. The Pioneer Valley Life Sciences Institute is Baystate's main biotechnology research facility, founded and operated through a partnership with the University of Massachusetts.

Key research focus areas include neurological, health outcomes, developmental and reproductive biology, structural biology, kinesiology, microbiology, cancer and bioengineering. Other major health care providers include the Sisters of Providence Health System, Holyoke Hospital and Cooley Dickinson.

These facilities employ the latest technology to deliver an advanced level of medical care. Technological innovations such as the robotic da Vinci Surgical System and the Siemens Company's state-of-the-art intensity-modulated radiotherapy (IMRT) aid western Massachusetts health care providers in obtaining the highest standards of quality of life and patient care. Local colleges and universities support this vibrant industry by offering a spectrum of career training and degree programs to a large regional health care workforce.

A growing number of health and biomedical products and services have been developed from research and clinical R&D in the region, building on its legacy as home for innovative, quality product manufacturing. The Knowledge Corridor is particularly known for the quality of its medical device manufacturing industry, applying expertise in precision metalworking to the exacting requirements of FDA-regulated products. More than 50 companies employ 3,000 workers in all aspects of the medical device industry, including component manufacturing, contract manufacturing, labeling, and testing.

More than 200 faculty members at the University of Massachusetts Amherst specialize in health and biomedical research, in addition to scientists at nearby Smith College and Mount Holyoke College. National Institute of Health awards to UMass researchers average millions of dollars per year, and the university is constructing new lab and teaching buildings to support its growing role as a translational biomedical research institution. The Patrick administration is also investing \$1 billion over ten years in the growth of the state's life sciences cluster, with over \$109 million in grants through Massachusetts Life Sciences Center awarded to western Massachusetts educational and research institutions in early 2013 for capital and planning projects to support research, development and training.

The LQ for health care in the Knowledge Corridor is 1.34, with the Springfield metropolitan area at 1.56. For medical device manufacturing, the Knowledge Corridor has an LQ of 1.46 and Springfield is 1.27.

Educational Services

In the Pioneer Valley region (the 43 cities and towns within the Hampshire and Hampden County areas), there are 13 public and private colleges and universities, several of which are nationally recognized institutions. Together, these educational institutions employ over 12,000 people in two distinct geographic clusters. In the northern half of the region, the well-known Five College area is home to the University of Massachusetts/Amherst, Smith College, Mount Holyoke College, Hampshire College, and Amherst College. These five institutions together graduate more than 6,000 students each year and employ approximately 8,500 people. The University of Massachusetts employs more than half of these (approximately 4,800 people), making it the largest educational institution in the region and the third largest single employer within the Pioneer Valley region.

In the southern half of the region, the Cooperating Colleges of Greater Springfield encompass the remaining eight educational institutions within the Pioneer Valley region. These eight colleges and universities - American International College, Bay Path College, Elms College, Holyoke Community College, Springfield College, Springfield Technical Community College, Western New England University, and Westfield State University employ nearly 4,000 people and graduate more than 6,000 students annually.

Together, the 13 colleges and universities afford residents of the Pioneer Valley region a multitude of educational opportunities and provide employers with an annual pool of skilled talent. Many specialized training programs and area trade schools also exist to support and enhance the region's major industry clusters by offering advanced programs in the fields of manufacturing, precision machining, health care, information technology, life sciences, medical devices, financial services, biotechnology and renewable energy. Organizations dedicated to curriculum development or related educational services are also part of this cluster. This sector provides the region with a strong employment base and a superior foundation from which to launch many of the region's economic development initiatives. The LQ for educational services is 2.08 for the Knowledge Corridor and 2.66 for the Springfield metropolitan area.

Advanced Manufacturing

Western Massachusetts has long been known for a large and diverse manufacturing industry which still employs approximately 40,000 workers throughout the region. Its primary focus is developing parts and products within the Fabricated Metal, Paper, Computer, Electronics and Transportation Equipment industries, used to supply major commercial manufacturers in the United States and abroad. Firearms manufacturing is quite highly concentrated in the Springfield area, with an LQ of 27.57, primarily due to the presence of Smith and Wesson. For the Knowledge Corridor as a whole, it is 9.04. Plastics manufacturing is another strong industry in the Springfield area, with an LQ of 2.48, while its presence in the full corridor is average (1.03).

This cluster works extensively with regional industry organizations, such as the Western Massachusetts Chapter of the National Tooling and Machining Association, to develop and implement new, innovative technologies, to share intellectual capital and resources, and to develop partnerships with companies that demand precision manufacturing conducted in a time-sensitive, cost-effective manner.

Precision Machining

As a subcategory of the Advanced Manufacturing cluster, precision machining is quite strong in Western Massachusetts, with about 230 companies and 7,700 employees. These companies perform high-mix, low-volume, highly-engineered precision machining of components and assemblies for major commercial manufacturers, aircraft engine builders and military equipment contractors across the globe.

The region's precision machining companies have adopted new technologies to increase productivity and competitiveness as suppliers. These businesses also have the available infrastructure, equipment, and employee skill sets needed to commercialize projects now being designed and developed for markets such as alternative energy, bio-technology, clean technology and medical devices. Precision machining in the Knowledge Corridor has an LQ of 3.41, and for the Springfield metropolitan area it is 2.71.

The Western Massachusetts Chapter of the National Tooling and Machining Association and its more than 60 member companies are committed to developing new technology, providing applications engineering support, implementing sustainable workforce development strategies, enhancing employee skills and developing business partnerships. A dense concentration of companies, industry networks and academic support programs enhance the precision machining environment in the Pioneer Valley, and the Massachusetts Center for Advanced Precision Manufacturing Technology was launched in 2010 to develop and implement new, innovative technologies, share intellectual capital and resources, and forge partnerships among companies.

Financial Services

Multi-national banks, the Springfield-based operations of the MassMutual Financial Group and Liberty Mutual, as well as the Knowledge Corridor's dense concentration of insurance giants, all contribute to the region's financial services cluster. The Regional Plan Association calculated the LQ for the Knowledge Corridor as 1.51, with Springfield at 0.93.

Springfield is the headquarters of the MassMutual Financial Group, an industry staple since 1851 that sits among the Fortune 100 and was recently named one of the magazine's "Most Admired" companies. This mutually owned financial protection, accumulation and income management company is among the region's largest employers and plays an active role in the area's development. MassMutual subsidiary Babson Capital Management LLC is an entrepreneurial investment firm also located in Springfield. A more recent addition to the region's financial services landscape is the Liberty Mutual Insurance Group, the sixth largest personal and car insurance company in the United States. Liberty Mutual moved some of their operations into the Springfield Technology Park next to Springfield Technical Community College as the result of a 2008 expansion.

"The Insurance Capital of the World," Hartford, Connecticut, is less than 30 minutes from downtown Springfield. Internationally-known companies based along the Knowledge Corridor include Travelers, Aetna, The Hartford, ING and The Phoenix Companies, Inc.

Banking also plays a major role in the Pioneer Valley. Bank of America, Sovereign Bank, Citizens Bank and TD BankNorth are the largest of these institutions. Alternative financing also maintains a presence through the region's venture capital and angel investors.

Digital Technologies

Information and communications technology is a driver of economic growth in the Pioneer Valley. Industrial-scale computer operations, regional IT and telecom companies, and hundreds of small-scale tech enterprises all leverage the region's rich digital infrastructure, skilled workforce, research resources, cluster ecosystem and geographic advantages to serve national markets from a low-cost New England setting.

The Pioneer Valley is host to a key northeast U.S. fiber optic backbone junction point with telecommunication points of presence for AT & T, MCI WorldCom, Verizon, Sprint and Frontier. The Springfield Technology Park is outfitted with state-of-the-art fiber optic telecommunications infrastructure for voice lines, high-speed data and Internet access. One of the least expensive locations for a business to send and receive high-speed data transmissions in New England, the Technology Park is connected to fiber-optic cables laid alongside the region's interstate highways as well as several local fiber loops, including a direct fiber connect to the University of Massachusetts and the Five College System. Also a major switch hub of the Northeast, the Park is home to switching centers for several major long distance telephone carriers. In addition to the Park's tenant companies' investments in equipment and technology, the Western Massachusetts Electric Company provides two separate 13,800 volt feeders derived from separate sub-stations. The fiber-optic backbones provide high-speed service throughout most of the urban and suburban landscape, and a "middle mile" project is partly completed, extending service to the underserved rural areas. Broadband, Internet and computational infrastructure links corporations, state data systems, and local colleges and universities.

The Knowledge Corridor's 29 colleges provide a consistent flow of two-year, four-year, and advanced degree graduates, equipped with the industry-specific skills to meet the region's high-tech workforce demands. In the Pioneer Valley alone, 13 colleges graduate nearly 500 students each year in computer science and other digital technology majors at all levels. Many area colleges are noted for information technology excellence and work closely with the local IT industry, providing interns, academic research assistance and custom training courses for companies. Specifically, the University of Massachusetts' Computer Science Program has been the recipient of a number of prestigious industry designations, including being ranked among the top 20 computer science Ph.D. programs in the U.S. according to a National Research Council study.

The size of the region's high-tech workforce is exemplified through organizations such as Hidden Tech, a rapidly growing group of 1,900 participants from 800-plus small and home-based companies. Another growing sector in the Pioneer Valley is the video game industry. The Entertainment Software Association has identified Massachusetts as one of the top five centers for game design and development in the U.S. with over 4,000 people directly or indirectly employed in the field in the state. In western Massachusetts, a number of small game development studios are operating and building products for the entertainment and serious games marketplace.

Energy and Clean Technology

The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) reported in 2013 that the Massachusetts clean energy economy now employs nearly 80,000 people. The 2013 Massachusetts Clean Energy Industry Report identified 5,557 clean energy companies across the state that saw an 11.8percent increase in jobs between July 2012 and July 2013and expect continued employment growth. The report included clean energy companies ranging from construction and manufacturing to research and development.

The LQ for renewable energy industry in the Knowledge Corridor is 4.46, due to a high concentration in the Hartford area (8.31), while in the Springfield metro area it is 0.88. The Pioneer Valley can be a particularly efficient place to locate a renewable energy business because wage rates and real estate costs are lower than other major Northeast metro areas.

In 2008, Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick signed the Green Communities Act of 2007 into law. This landmark energy legislation is a comprehensive, multi-faceted energy reform bill that encourages energy and building efficiency, promotes renewable energy, creates green communities, implements elements of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), and provides market incentives and funding for various types of energy generation.

Tourism

The travel, tourism and hospitality industry plays an important role in the Pioneer Valley. As an industry that ranks second in the United States and third in the Commonwealth, it is critical to our economy. Tourist dollars are spent in a variety of ways that directly affect the bottom line of area businesses from transportation and fuel to food, lodging and entertainment. The LQ for Tourism is 0.95 in the Springfield metro area and 0.8 for the Knowledge Corridor as a whole.

The Pioneer Valley tourism industry cluster is boosted by the region's famed attractions, including Six Flags New England, Yankee Candle Village, the Dr. Seuss National Memorial Sculpture Garden, the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame and the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art. If or when a resort casino is located in the region, it will have a significant impact on tourism and visitor patterns. The Valley is also known for its unique festivals and fairs including the Eastern States Exposition (the "Big E"), Bright Nights at Forest Park, the Paradise City Arts Festival and Holyoke's St. Patrick's Day Parade, ranked in the nation's top three.

Howdy University is an affordable customer service training program in the region for front-line tourism industry workers. This program features training by nationally-known customer service experts, mini-grants for members to identify market niches, marketing programs and the annual Howdy awards for customer service excellence.

Creative Economy

The Pioneer Valley is recognized as having an active and prominent cultural community and is home to many artists and creative businesses. These activities and enterprises are a significant source of employment and income for the region. In addition to its colleges and universities, the region boasts many cultural institutions and other businesses that are

leaders in a variety of creative industries. Furthermore, its proximity to the major metropolitan areas of Boston, Hartford, and New York City, as well as to Bradley International Airport, provides a rich exchange of culture, innovation, and talent. The creative economy includes occupations and industries that focus on the production and distribution of cultural goods, services, and intellectual property, such as publishing, entertainment, design, journalism and writing, photography, performing arts and individual artists. Parts of the Pioneer Valley have significantly higher concentrations of creative workers than the state of Massachusetts or the nation as a whole, and these workers are found in a broad diversity of cultural occupations.

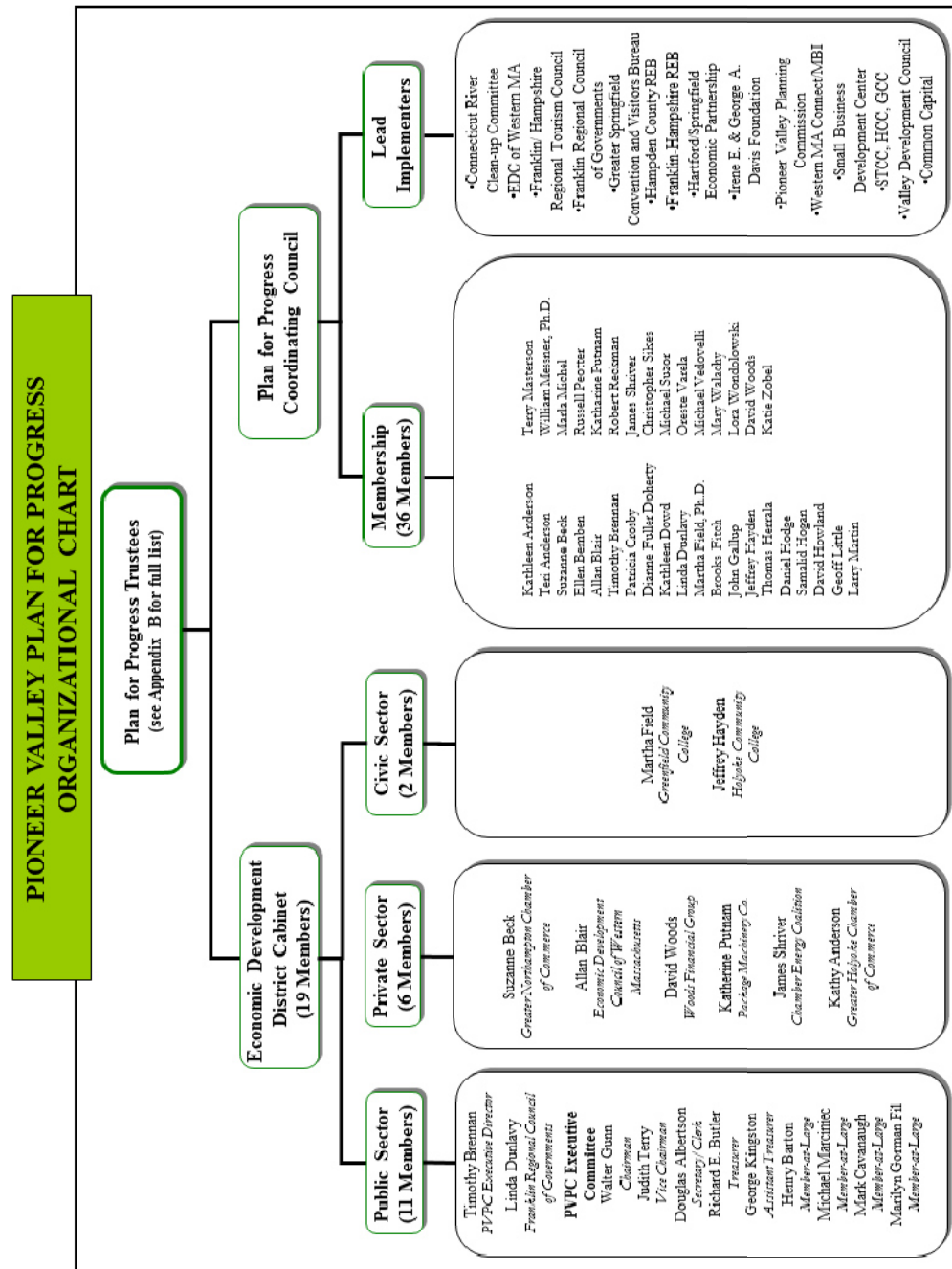
Availability of Partners and Resources for Economic Development

The long-term success of the Plan for Progress—as well as the region’s ability to achieve its strategic economic goals as outlined in the CEDS annual report—depends on a diverse and interconnected network of active economic partners.

The Plan for Progress partnership is essentially acting as a “server” of the Plan’s recommended action strategies that must be implemented in order to avoid or minimize serious economic problems, such as high unemployment levels and weak business retention, as well as to take advantage of compelling economic opportunities that promote sensible economic growth and prosperity—for example, leveraging a cluster of 13 higher education institutions and maintaining a cross-border economic alliance with the greater Hartford area.

The network of Plan for Progress partners is a careful mix of organizations recruited from the Pioneer Valley’s public (government), private (business), and civic (nonprofit) sectors, and then unified and networked by the CEDS planning process in order to realize a collaborative planning and implementation team.

Figure 29: Pioneer Valley Plan for Progress Organizational Chart



A VISION FOR THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION



Gateway City Arts Studios and Co-Working Space, Holyoke
Photo: Ed Cohen

The New 2014 Plan for Progress

A new “vision” will be set forth in the 10-year update of the Plan for Progress, with new and updated goals, strategies and action steps to implement the vision of success.

The original 1994 Plan for Progress was created as a blueprint

for growth and development of the regional economy. It

was revised in 2004 with an even broader concept of regional development – one that capitalized on the ideas and perspectives of countless people within the Pioneer Valley and incorporated our partners to the north and south in the Knowledge Corridor. The 2014 update to the Plan places a strong emphasis the most important factor confronting the Knowledge Corridor economy, namely the talent, or the human capital, that comprises the current and future workforce for our interstate economic region.

The new, 2014 Plan for Progress will present a vision of:

A strong, innovative, engaging, and vibrant economy and quality of life that fosters prosperity and sustainability and is driven by collaborative leadership.

This vision will be expressed through four major goal areas, each with its own set of strategies and tangible action steps to guide the Plan’s implementation. The Pioneer Valley Economic Development District (EDD) provides another mechanism by which the strategies in the Plan for Progress can be successfully advanced from planning to implementation. All of the strategies will be periodically revised in order to meet the region’s changing economic needs, conditions, and circumstances.

The new goals and strategies of the Plan for Progress are described in the following sections. Detailed action steps are being developed as part of a comprehensive process of stakeholder feedback, public input and focus groups. The 2004 Plan for Progress and annual CEDS updates are available from the PVPC or online at www.pvpc.org.

2014 Plan for Progress – Background and Context

The third decade overhaul and updating of the Pioneer Valley Plan for Progress is scheduled for completion in the fall of 2014. The original version of the Plan for Progress was completed and released in 1994 with a subsequent ten-year overhaul produced in 2004. Thus, the Plan has now been in place and utilized for nearly 20 years serving as the Pioneer Valley's strategic economic development guide. For the past 10 years, it has been anchored by 15 integrated action strategies, each with assigned key implementers, designed to foster the creation of job opportunities and a collaborative region that is capable of addressing its most pressing economic problems and leveraging its most important opportunities and assets to foster economic growth and enhanced prosperity for all segments of the Pioneer Valley's population.

To streamline and enhance the utility of the document, the 2014 Plan for Progress is structured to revolve around four major goal areas, each with a group of related strategies to be undertaken by lead implementers. For more than a decade, lead implementers of the Plan have taken responsibility for key action steps, and this organizational structure continues in the 2014 update. A number of major accomplishments have been achieved as will be detailed in the 2014 CEDS Update and presented to the Plan for Progress Coordinating Council at a series of sessions over the current year. As the strategies are now distilled into four major areas, it is intended that lead implementers in each group collaborate and work together towards related goals.

In 2008, a new accountability system was established for the Plan for Progress, utilizing critical metrics to assess economic trends and determine whether the region is achieving its stated goals. Each year, the data is compared to the prior year; however, in the 2014 CEDS update, changes over the entire period from 2008 to 2014 will be examined. These metrics will continue to be used as benchmarks so that there is consistency over time.

2014 Plan for Progress Goals

The Plan for Progress will encompass the following four major goals, each of which includes a set of detailed strategies, with short- and long-term action steps. The action steps are under development and will be presented at a Plan for Progress release event in the fall of 2014.

- 1) Develop and maintain a globally competitive and regionally engaged talent pool.**
- 2) Foster an environment where established, new, and growing businesses and organizations thrive.**
- 3) Implement and enhance the infrastructure that connects, sustains and ensures the resiliency of the region.**
- 4) Conduct economic development activities in a regionally responsible manner, prioritizing collaboration and engagement.**

Goal #1: Develop and Maintain a Globally Competitive and Regionally Engaged Talent Pool

The 2014 update to the Plan will include a primary focus on the most important factor confronting the Pioneer Valley economy, namely the talent, or the human capital, that comprises the current and future workforce for our region. Workforce and talent issues today constitute the most important of all factors for both attracting and retaining businesses and jobs and, thus, are pivotal to the sustained economic success of metropolitan regions across the U.S. – including the Pioneer Valley and its larger region, the interstate Knowledge Corridor. Thus, a significant emphasis will be placed on these efforts and on collaboration among the lead implementers.

The strategies for this goal will be consistent with the Knowledge Corridor Workforce and Talent Action Strategies prepared by the UMass Donahue Institute. They will update and provide new direction for education and workforce-related strategies and action steps that existed in the earlier versions of the Plan for Progress. The current draft of these strategies includes the following goals and major strategy areas:

Major goals, as identified by the UMass Donahue Institute:

- 1) Increase the attainment of middle skills and higher educational and training credentials to be comparable to the best performers nationally.
- 2) Eliminate the gap in educational performance between urban core areas and the rest of the region.
- 3) Attain national recognition as an economic corridor that provides ample talent, resources and supports for key business sectors to survive.
- 4) Sustain and scale successful programs and collaborations to solidify gains and ultimately transform the region.

Specific strategies and action steps are being developed for the Plan for Progress that are consistent with these overarching goals.

Goal #2: Foster an Environment Where Established, New, and Growing Businesses and Organizations Thrive

The number of businesses in the Pioneer Valley continues to grow, consisting predominantly of small enterprises of less than 50 employees, and despite the “Great Recession” of 2008-9, some industries are expanding, developing new products and services, and hiring more employees. This goal of the Plan for Progress focuses on providing the essential ingredients for businesses of all sizes to thrive, from the sole proprietor to the largest corporations, with special emphasis on increasing coordination and outreach to entrepreneurs of all ethnicities.

This cannot be achieved without also bolstering the strength of the urban, suburban and downtown employment centers in communities throughout the Pioneer Valley. In particular, as we look ahead the Pioneer Valley must increasingly focus on its urban core area comprised of three of the region’s four state-designated “Gateway Cities,” namely

Springfield, Holyoke, and Chicopee. The urban core is a crucial part of our region's economy since it is a primary source of the Pioneer Valley's business capital, labor force, work sites and buildings, mobility assets, power and communications infrastructure, innovation capability and jobs. Other urban areas, including Northampton, Easthampton, Greenfield and the fourth Gateway City of Westfield, must also be strengthened so that all parts of the region have strong employment and commercial centers.

The following strategies will address these needs:

Strategy #1: Retain, Attract, and Grow Businesses and Priority Clusters

Strategy #2: Advocate Efficient Regulatory Processes at All Levels of Government

Strategy #3: Market Our Region

Goal #3: Implement and Enhance the Infrastructure that Connects, Sustains and Ensures the 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. The following strategies are meant to achieve these goals:

Strategy #1: Enhance High-Tech and Conventional Infrastructure

Strategy #2: Transition to Clean Energy to Reduce Business Costs and Improve the Environment

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

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

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

Goal #4: Conduct Economic Development Activities in a Regionally Responsible Manner, Prioritizing Collaboration and Engagement.

The new Plan for Progress celebrates our pioneering history of innovation, social responsibility, freedom and collaboration. However, there remain economic disparities in the region (as well as across the state) which must be addressed if the region is to fully embrace success and long-term prosperity. The recent success of the Leadership Pioneer Valley program is an indication of the need and desire to sustain and improve broad collaboration and develop a succession strategy for regional leadership. Furthermore, responsible economic development includes a regular and honest evaluation of progress through measurable benchmarks, intended to guide us as well as demonstrate progress to those outside our region.

Strategy #1: Foster Equity and Economic Opportunity through Public Policy Decisions, Educational Opportunities and Advocacy

Strategy #2: Engage, Convene and Collaborate with Diverse Groups to Maximize Regional Success

Integration with Other Economic Development Plans

The Plan for Progress Coordinating Council has formal agreements with some entities and works closely with state and other regional or local organizations. Furthermore, many of the plans prepared by these entities were utilized to develop specific action steps for the 2014 Plan for Progress. There has been an abundance of planning efforts that can be continually tapped to maintain a living document to guide our efforts. The following plans are of particular importance, and the Coordinating Council will review them regularly and meet frequently with their proponents to find opportunities to coordinate efforts.

Choosing to Compete in the 21st Century: An Economic Development Policy and Strategic Plan for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In December 2011, the state of Massachusetts released a new statewide economic development plan. In August 2010, the Massachusetts Legislature passed economic development legislation that calls upon each gubernatorial administration to develop and publish, with the assistance of an economic development planning council, an economic development policy and strategic plan for the Commonwealth. During 2011, an economic development planning council of 34 public and private sector representatives led by Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Greg Bialecki developed this strategy and plan, which builds on the job creation strategy of the Patrick-Murray Administration over the last five years.

This strategy and plan outlines five categories for action for Massachusetts to retain or improve its competitive position in the world's economy. Within each category, accomplishments were recognized and critical priorities were identified for further improvement, together with specific action steps. The "Five Steps Towards a More Competitive Massachusetts Economy" are as follows:

1. Building Talent: Advance Education and Workforce Development for Middle-Skill Jobs Through Coordination of Education, Economic Development, and Workforce Development Programs

- Design and develop a cohesive, coordinated workforce development system with clear leadership
- Improve responsiveness of workforce programs for business and workers that will meet the demands of the marketplace
- Prioritize goals of the State STEM Plan that align with middle-skill jobs

2. Supporting Innovation and Entrepreneurship:

- Strengthen and support our innovation community
- Build and retain talent for the innovation economy
- Expand our culture of innovation

- Support growth to scale

3. Empowering Regions: Support Regional Development Through Infrastructure Investments and Local Empowerment:

- Make public infrastructure investments that support regional growth opportunities
- Create regional and local economic development teams led by municipal officials who are “CEOs for Economic Development”
- Educate regional and local officials, municipal leaders and their staffs
- Empower municipal leaders and their staffs with more local input and control

4. Increasing the Ease of Doing Business:

- Engage in on-going state regulatory review
- Re-align business development efforts
- Market the strengths of doing business in Massachusetts

5. Improving Our Cost Competitiveness:

- Contain the increasing cost of health care while protecting access and quality
- Reduce energy costs while creating a diversified energy portfolio that balances competitive pricing with sustainability
- Manage the impact on business of long-term cost pressures within state and local government
- Make the tax structure more simple, competitive, and predictable by addressing the use of tax-based business incentives

Our Region, Our Future: A Plan for a Connected-Competitive-Vibrant-Green Knowledge Corridor Region

This plan is an effort of the Knowledge Corridor Consortium, a partnership made up of representatives from 45 Connecticut and Massachusetts municipalities and organizations throughout three planning regions (the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, the Capitol Region Council of Governments in Connecticut, and the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency). Funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the project calls for these partners to work together to create new opportunities for sustainability in the environment, land use, housing, transportation, employment, and leadership development. Draft plans prepared to date can be found at www.sustainableknowledgecorridor.com.

The overarching Knowledge Corridor Regional Plan, to be completed in 2014, will include several innovative new elements, several of which will help to implement Plan for Progress strategies: a green infrastructure plan for clean water, a regional climate action plan, a workforce talent development strategy, an affordable and equitable housing element, a sustainable environment plan, and a food security plan. The plan will: (1) build off of major federal investments in the region, including the new Springfield-New Haven high speed rail line; (2) seek to create energy-efficient, affordable housing opportunities near transit and job centers in well-designed, mixed-use settings; (3) enhance opportunities for MA/CT cross-border communication and decision-making; and (4) establish imaginative new efforts such as a regional leadership training program and a web-based Virtual Sustainability Concourse. The two latter efforts (under #4) have been accomplished and results can be seen at www.leadershipv.org and www.sustainableknowledgecorridor.com. Milestones from the entire process to date are also described in the “Accomplishments” section of this CEDS report.

Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts: Strategic Goals 2013

The EDC of Western MA completed a strategic plan to implement its mission “to stimulate and facilitate a vigorous regional economy, encouraging and sustaining capital investment and quality job growth.” The following focused strategies are outlined in the plan:

- 1) Stimulate Quality Job Growth
 - Increase Opportunities for Existing Businesses
 - Stimulate New Business Formation
 - Attract New Business
- 2) Increase Investment – Increase the Number of Active Projects
- 3) Lead the Region’s Economic Development
 - Collaborate on Development Projects Within Gateway Cities that Lead to Job Growth and Economic Vitality
 - Speak with One Business Voice on Issues Affecting Economic Development
 - Compile and Publish Key Economic Indicators
 - Advocate for Public Policies that Positively Affect Economic Development
 - Convene the Business Community around Topics of Importance to the Region
 - Convene Stakeholder Groups

Pioneer Valley Growth Business Study

Several local partners sponsored a Pioneer Valley Growth Business Study, conducted by the UMass Donahue Institute in 2013. The study identifies industry sectors and businesses that are growing, need capital and will have high community impact, particularly through increased employment. It identifies characteristics and challenges of these companies as well as financing and business assistance needs. The partners are using the information to develop new business assistance services in the region targeting growth oriented companies. The next phase of the work will expand the research to the entire Knowledge Corridor. The partners are: Common Capital, EDC of Western Massachusetts, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Franklin Regional Council of Governments, Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation, MA Small Business Development Center, and MassMutual Financial Group on behalf of Develop Springfield.

Massachusetts Broadband Institute – Closing the Digital Divide: Broadband Infrastructure, Adoption and Digital Inclusion in Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MassTech) is a public economic development agency collaborating with industry, academia, and government to foster growth of the Massachusetts innovation economy. MassTech has three major divisions - The Innovation Institute, the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI), and the Massachusetts eHealth Institute (MeHI). The primary mission of the MBI is to extend affordable, robust, high-speed Internet access to homes, businesses, schools, libraries, medical facilities, government offices and other public places across Massachusetts, with a focus on the hard-to-serve areas of western and central Massachusetts. In addition, MBI is working to promote statewide broadband adoption and digital inclusion particularly in low income and low adoption communities.

Broadband Infrastructure

The Massachusetts Broadband Institute recently completed construction of MassBroadband 123, a 1,200-mile fiber-optic middle mile network that will bring high-speed internet access to over 1,200 community anchor institutions in more than 120 unserved and underserved communities in Western and Central Massachusetts. The project, funded through state and Federal funds, connects community facilities such as schools, town halls, public safety facilities, community colleges, libraries, and health care institutions to the open-access network. MassBroadband 123 is a long-term infrastructure project that will create a foundation for future growth. In 2013, Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick proposed \$40 million in bond funding for the MBI to help develop public-private last mile solutions. The legislative proposal has been approved by the Commonwealth's House of Representatives, with funding increased to \$50 million, and is currently under review in the State Senate. If authorized, build out of last mile projects is expected to span multiple years and will require matching private and public funds.

Broadband Adoption, Technology Adoption, and Digital Inclusion

MassTech also supports broadband adoption, technology adoption, and digital inclusion across the Commonwealth through the following initiatives:

- **MassVetsAdvisor:** Launched by the MBI in 2012, MassVetsAdvisor is a web based resource portal which connects Veterans to Federal, state, and non-profit benefit programs.
- **The Small Business Technical Assistance Program:** Pilot program launched by the MBI in collaboration with regional Community Development Corporations, this program provides small businesses in all regions of the Commonwealth with financial assistance to incorporate internet technology to support business growth.
- **Massachusetts eHealth Institute (MeHI):** Works to drive adoption of critical health technologies, supporting the health care community to implement electronic health record and health information exchange technology. MeHI's major initiatives include the Medicaid Electronic Health Record (EHR) Incentive Operations program, the Regional Extension Center (REC) program, the Health Information Exchange (HIE) program, and the eHealth Economic and Workforce Development initiative. Broadband access and adoption is essential to successful implementation of the Health Information Exchange and Electronic Health Records.
- **The Broadband Adoption and Digital Inclusion Research Study:** A project initiated by MBI which investigates internet and digital technology adoption trends across Massachusetts. Preliminary research indicates that 1.6 million Massachusetts residents do not use the internet, even in locations where high speed internet service is available. Low adoption rates correlate to educational attainment, household income, and age, with the lowest rates of high speed residential internet and computer use primarily in urban and Gateway Cities (mid-sized municipalities in the Commonwealth which have been provided special legislative-focus for economic development based on lower than average median incomes and educational attainment levels).

Target populations for broadband adoption and digital inclusion programs include: Low income households, adults with high school education or less, Hispanic and African American households, English as a second language learners, seniors, people with disabilities, small businesses, and municipalities. The Digital Inclusion Study will be completed in May 2014 and will include recommended model programs to provide accessible, affordable internet access; affordable computer equipment, software, and tech support; digital education for residents, businesses, and municipalities; and assistive technology for people with disabilities.

Access to technology and digital education for all residents, businesses, and institutions is essential for success in a global economy and a digital world impacting every aspect of daily life including:

- Educational Success and Lifelong Learning
- Workforce Readiness/Employment
- Business Development

- Health Care Information and Delivery
- Access to Governmental and Essential Services
- Social and Civic Engagement

Goals and Objectives:

Access and use of high speed internet, technology, and digital knowledge is essential to success in a global economy and a digital world. The following cross-cutting objectives support state and regional infrastructure, economic and workforce development, business growth and development, educational attainment, delivery of governmental and essential services, and civic engagement goals.

- Foster the deployment of telecommunications infrastructure to enhance access to global networks and to address gaps in broadband availability and service through public-private telecommunications infrastructure initiatives, including but not limited to:
 - Open access broadband initiatives such as MassBroadband 123 and the Open Cape project
 - Public computer centers and public internet access points
 - Affordable internet access and computer equipment programs
- Integrate internet adoption, technology adoption, and digital education into economic and workforce development, business development, education, housing, health care, and open government policy including but not limited to:
 - Foster digital literacy and technology education in schools, colleges, community based education, business assistance and development, accessible technology, workforce training, and online learning and public education programs.
 - Promote e-commerce, e-health, and e-government services and initiatives.
 - Promote affordable housing development wired for internet access.

Innovation-Based Economic Development Strategy for Holyoke and the Pioneer Valley Region

This report and strategy document came out of a comprehensive process conducted by a regional/local Holyoke Innovation District Task Force, with the assistance of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative's John Adams Innovation Institute. The key goals and objectives of this report have been adopted by the Plan for Progress Coordinating Council for inclusion in the Plan for Progress.

On June 11, 2009, Governor Deval Patrick, joined by MIT President Susan Hockfield, University of Massachusetts President Jack Wilson, Boston University President Robert Brown, Housing and Economic Development Secretary Greg Bialecki, and representatives of EMC and Cisco, signed a Memorandum of Understanding announcing the desire to locate a state-of-the-art Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center (MGHPCC) in Holyoke, Massachusetts. Northeastern University and Harvard University later joined the consortium. Considered the “third leg of science” along with theory and experimentation, high performance computing uses a large number of extremely powerful and fast computers to carry out advanced computing in key areas of research such as life sciences, clean energy, and climate change. For world-class universities, high performance computing has become a necessity to compete with other research institutions in today’s world, and it is also a catalyst for innovation in research and the development of new products and services.

The MGHPCC was completed in November 2012 and now anchors a downtown Innovation District that is beginning to catalyze the innovation economy in Holyoke.

A regional/local Innovation District Task Force was previously established to guide the creation of the District and developed a strategic plan in 2011. The plan, called the “Innovation-Based Economic Development Strategy for Holyoke and the Pioneer Valley,” has been incorporated into the Plan for Progress and CEDS (see Strategy #15).

The MGHPCC not only provides an invaluable increase in the computing capacity that brings all these benefits to the partnering institutions but also serves as a showcase of green energy use and green facilities design, is scalable to meet the needs of additional partners and computational demands, and will continue to serve as a catalyst for economic, educational, and workforce development in Holyoke and the region.

Rebuild Springfield Plan

In response to the June 1, 2011 tornado that devastated parts of Springfield and neighboring communities, the City of Springfield undertook a comprehensive redevelopment planning process. A public/private partnership between DevelopSpringfield, a non-profit development corporation, and the Springfield Redevelopment Authority was established to engage local citizens in a systematic planning process. Over a period of six months, using a consultant who also worked with New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, a total of about 2,000 residents participated in nineteen separate community meetings. These residents are the ultimate authors of this plan, which also builds on previous plans for the city including neighborhood plans, Urban Land Institute (ULI) reports, and others. The intent of the plan is more than just to return the city to pre-tornado conditions, but to establish realistic short and long-term visions for the future and to begin implementation.

The Rebuild Springfield Plan has two levels of focus – the tornado-impacted neighborhoods and the city as a whole. The neighborhoods affected by the tornado were organized into three Planning Districts: 1) Metro Center/South End; 2) Maple-High/Six Corners, Upper Hill, Old Hill and northern Forest Park; and 3) East Forest Park and Sixteen Acres

Very specific implementation strategies have been identified for each of these areas, building on successful models and initiatives such as the C-3 Policing program and the city's Business Improvement District, while creating new initiatives such as reinforcing a cluster of eateries to form a "restaurant row", building trails along the Mill River, expanding the role of local schools to become community centers, and providing sidewalks and bike lanes on key connector streets.

The Citywide (as well as District) recommendations are organized around a "Community Nexus" of physical, cultural, social, organizational, economic, and educational assets, resulting in a holistic plan that takes into account all aspects of the community experience.

Greater Franklin County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

The Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) administers the Greater Franklin County Economic Development District and produces an annual CEDS report for the region. The 2013 Draft CEDS contains the required elements of the EDA-funded program and outlines a set of regional goals and objectives:

GOAL A: IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE AND INCLUSIVE REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROGRAM FOR THE GREATER FRANKLIN COUNTY REGION

Objective 1: Build local economic development capacity.

Objective 2: Foster regional economic development collaboration.

GOAL B: ENHANCE THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH REDEVELOPMENT AND REVITALIZATION, AND APPROPRIATE INFRASTRUCTURE DEPLOYMENT

Objective 1: Execute a regional Brownfields Program to foster the assessment, remediation and redevelopment of properties for economic use.

Objective 2: Support revitalization of downtowns and village centers to generate new economic activity.

Objective 3: Advance the use of existing industrial properties and the siting of new industrial development, as appropriate to the needs and vision of the region.

Objective 4: Encourage improvement to the regional transportation system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods.

Objective 5: Foster the deployment of telecommunications infrastructure to enhance access to global networks and advanced broadband services.

GOAL C: ADVANCE INITIATIVES THAT STRENGTHEN AND SUPPORT THE GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY OF KEY INDUSTRIES AND REGIONAL INNOVATION CLUSTERS

Objective 1: Support entrepreneurship and business development through access to technical assistance, capital, and networking.

Objective 2: Enhance the workforce through education and skills training, and improving access to job opportunities.

Objective 3: Encourage access to and the expansion of markets through marketing and promotion, and cluster development.

The FRCOG works closely with the Pioneer Valley Plan for Progress and is represented among the Trustees of the Plan. Certain initiatives, such as broadband expansion, north-south commuter/passenger rail service, tourism, and others, are addressed jointly by the two organizations and efforts are coordinated to achieve the greatest results. This partnership will continue in future years.

Regional Employment Boards

Two regional employment boards serve our region. The Regional Employment Board (REB) of Hampden County has a Strategic Plan for 2011-2013, which is now being revised and updated. Based on the REB's dedication to promote lifelong learning, included in the Plan is a commitment to develop a continuum of strategies that address all segments of the workforce:

- The *Emerging* workforce of in-school and out-of-school, particularly Pre-K and at-risk youth aged 14-21, who are or will be the newest entrants into the workplace, and who need education, career guidance, job readiness skills, and support services.
- The *Transitional* workforce of unemployed or underemployed workers who need retraining and job search assistance to move into new jobs, including ex-offenders, and disconnected older youth.
- The *Incumbent* workforce of employed workers who need additional education and training to retain or advance in their jobs.

The Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board (FHREB) also has a Five-Year Strategic Plan for 2008-2013, which is being updated in 2014. The Plan assessed the region's challenges, unique workforce development strengths, policy implications, and additional strategic issues related to priority industry areas. Goals and objectives for 2008-2013 included:

- 1) Establish Comprehensive Workforce Strategies for Key Industry Sectors (Education, Healthcare, and Manufacturing, as well as Leisure/Hospitality and Retail/Sales).
- 2) Promote Awareness of and Attention to Significant Industry Trends Tied to Our Regional Identity (Agriculture and Green Industry).
- 3) Continuously Improve Effective Programs and Approaches for Key Workforce Populations.
- 4) Strengthen Board Leadership and Involvement.

- 5) Become An Increasingly Known And Valued Presence in the Business Community.
- 6) Serve as a Hub for Youth Career Readiness and Employment Connections.

Both Regional Employment Boards have prepared plans for FY14 Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds, available on their websites. The plans incorporate key elements of their longer-term strategies and goals.

Other Plans

Numerous other plans for the region and its communities exist, including strategic plans of the region's chambers of commerce and regional non-profit organizations. Many of these planning efforts elaborate on key elements of the Plan for Progress that cannot be fully addressed in one regional economic development planning document, such as in-depth transportation planning or clean energy strategies.

Several other regional plans have been generated by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, most recently *Our Next Future: An Action Plan for Building a Smart, Sustainable and Resilient Pioneer Valley*. This plan, funded through the HUD Sustainable Communities Initiative, was created to chart a course for a more vibrant, competitive, sustainable and equitable region. This involves creating more livable communities, with opportunities for rewarding work and business growth, affordable and available housing, a clean environment, safe and walkable neighborhoods, options for healthy exercise and play, and viable transportation alternatives. The plan is available online at www.sustainableknowledgecorridor.com,

Franklin County also received U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Sustainable Communities funding and has completed *Sustainable Franklin County*, a regional plan for the northern Pioneer Valley. The Plan Vision states, in part, that "The Regional Plan for Sustainable Development's 20-year vision for Franklin County is one in which economic vitality and social equity will thrive in balance with our natural and cultural resources."

PLAN FOR PROGRESSMAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2004-2014



Groundbreaking for Canal Walk Extension, Holyoke
Photo: Ed Cohen

Strategy Updates

The success of the 2004 Plan for Progress is evident from the many accomplishments of its Trustees, partners and key implementers. A tremendous amount of teamwork, dedication to our region, and willingness to engage in long-term economic development work has paid dividends in capital projects, outreach and collaboration efforts, and initiatives that support a wide range of talent, from students to community

leaders. Since the 2004 Plan was established, many of the key action steps laid out in the Plan have been implemented. The following strategy updates provide selected major highlights from the past 10 years. While there are many additional accomplishments, these selected achievements represent the projects that have met the original goals of the strategy, were accomplished by the identified lead implementers, and have had the greatest impact.

Strategy #1:

Attract, Retain, and Grow Existing Businesses and Priority Clusters

Lead Implementer

- Economic Development Partners of the Western Massachusetts Economic Development Council

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.

Furthermore, as competition and the demand to "work globally" seems to increase exponentially every year, and with the emergence of a knowledge economy driven by innovation and entrepreneurship, the Plan for Progress continues to focus on building further collaboration between the region's higher education institutions and the region's businesses. The transfer of intellectual capital from the academy to the private sector will be a primary builder of the Pioneer Valley's economy in the future.

The Plan for Progress focuses also on attracting and retaining businesses in the region's urban core communities, so that all of the region's residents benefit from a growing economy.

Major Strategy Accomplishments for 2004-2014

- The Economic Development Partners of the Western Massachusetts Economic Development Council collaborated on many major new developments in the region over the past decade. Some of the most significant projects are described below:
 - The new Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center (MGHPCC) opened in Holyoke in 2012, with a ceremony led by Governor Patrick and attended by over 400 people. The \$165 million facility is a partnership of five universities – Harvard, MIT, Boston University, UMass and Northeastern – as well as Cisco, EMC, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The facility has created eight new permanent jobs, is facilitating high-level scientific research, and is a catalyst for the new Holyoke Innovation District. With capacity for over 20,000 computers, the center benefits from the clean energy and cooling power provided by the Holyoke hydroelectric plant and canals.
 - Under the Massachusetts Life Sciences Initiative, \$109.5 million in state grants for life sciences-related projects (encompassing biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, biomedical technologies, and medical devices) were awarded to the region in the spring of 2013.

- Westmass Area Development Corporation and the Town of Ludlow have made tremendous progress on the Ludlow Mills development. HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital of Western Massachusetts opened their new \$27 million facility at Ludlow Mills in early 2014, replacing an existing facility nearby. It will accommodate the current 53 beds but will provide patients with improved amenities. The hospital was built using green-design technology and energy-efficient building systems. Westmass completed the reconstruction of State Street in Ludlow including installation of new water line and a new high-pressure natural gas line to properties within the Ludlow Mills complex, facilitating buildout of the complex. WinnDevelopment has plans for a \$24.5 million project to create 83 senior independent-living apartments in one of the Ludlow Mill buildings.
- Construction of the \$110 million state data center at the former Springfield Technical High School site was completed, providing 100 new jobs and serving as a model for green technologies. The center, which preserves the historic brick façade of the original building, provides storage of state data systems and electronic records and provides a backup for the state's primary data center in Chelsea.
- Gulfstream Aerospace, a division of General Dynamics, completed construction of a \$23 million maintenance facility at Barnes Municipal Airport for their new ultra long-range G650 corporate jet. The new, \$125,000-square-foot hangar brings 100 new full-time jobs to Westfield.
- The Sisters of Providence Health System has nearly completed a \$20 million outpatient facility at Mercy Medical Center in Springfield. The 75,000 square-foot, three-story building will house outpatient rehabilitation programs, the Mercy Hearing Center, and two Mercy-affiliated physician practices, including Hampden County Physicians' Associates.
- Baystate Medical Center's new "Hospital of the Future" was completed in early 2012. Now called the MassMutual Wing, the 640,000-square-foot facility contains the Davis Family Heart and Vascular Center and the D'Amour Family Healing Garden. The Davis Center includes six advanced procedure and operating rooms, a dedicated 20-room unit for outpatient cardiovascular procedures, 96 private in-patient rooms and 32 cardiovascular critical-care rooms. A new 70,000-square-foot new emergency department was completed later in the year.
- Several major projects in the region have received federal Public Works funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) over the past 10 years:
 - The Holyoke Gas and Electric Department was awarded \$2.1 million from the EDA in 2011 for hydro-electric infrastructure improvements needed to support Holyoke's Innovation District and the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center. By making electrical transmission and distribution upgrades, with a total project cost of \$7.4 million, this project will expand capacity to 35 megawatts and allow for additional business development and job creation in the Innovation District.

- The Caring Health Center, a major community health care provider in Springfield, redeveloped three vacant historic buildings, one of which was damaged by the June 2011 tornado, into an expanded and updated health center and pharmacy in the South End. The \$20 million expansion has increased patient capacity from 16,000 to over 26,000 per year and created 159 permanent jobs in the health care industry. An investment of \$500,000 from the EDA was used for acquisition of medical and dental equipment.
- The City of Northampton and MassDevelopment, the recipients of \$750,000 in 2008 EDA Public Works funds, are nearing buildout of Village Hill Northampton, a 126-acre mixed use site. The city's biggest employer, L-3 KEO (formerly Kollmorgen Electro-Optical), relocated there and expanded operations, retaining the previously existing 330 jobs and gaining 30 high-skill, high-paying jobs. Other commercial development includes VCA, Inc., a fine woodworking company, and a two-story office building with major tenant Fazzi Associates, a national home care consulting firm that is expanding its Northampton operations. Residential development includes 129 housing units of apartments, townhouses, and single-family homes at both affordable and market rates.
- In 2006, a \$1 million award from EDA assisted with development of the Memorial Industrial Park II project adjacent to the Smith and Wesson facilities that now houses Performance Food Group and F.W. Webb.
- The Western Massachusetts Economic Development Council (EDC) has accomplished many of the objectives of this strategy by assessing the region's economic development potential and working closely with businesses that have sought to expand, locate, or relocate in the region:
 - The EDC commissioned CWS Consulting Group to assess ten regional industry sectors for growth and investment potential and prepare an "Economic Development and Business Attraction Planning" report which informed subsequent business outreach efforts. The study indicated that the region has significant competitive advantages in the medical device, photonics, plastics, specialized manufacturing and logistics industries. It also identified strengths in the aerospace/defense and financial service industries. It recommended an "opportunistic" approach to the life science industry given the region's proximity to the Boston/Cambridge "Super Cluster". The complete study can be found at <http://www.westernmassedc.com/cwsreport/>.
 - The EDC, its affiliates, and municipal partners developed a team-based approach to the business retention program known as the Homefield Advantage. This retention effort has continued over the past ten years with a range of initiatives, using data from CWS and other studies.

- One initiative of the Homefield Advantage program involved working intensively with existing major industry clusters in the region to determine barriers and opportunities for growth and expansion. The EDC continues to meet with each of the major business clusters (Banking, Precision Machining, Information Technology, Medical Devices, Health Care, Photonics, Equity Finance, and Paper and Plastic Manufacturing), to discuss strategies to create networks within clusters, bolster supply chains and improve business conditions in the region.
- The EDC partnered with the Associated Industries of Massachusetts (AIM) and the Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD) on the “BuyMass” initiative, seeking to connect small and medium-sized local firms with large OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturers). Western Massachusetts companies who can provide specialized production technologies are sought to partner with major regional businesses such as Pratt & Whitney in East Hartford, Raytheon in eastern Massachusetts, and Mestek in Westfield.
- The EDC hosted a Growth Sector Series of presentations focused on opportunities for manufacturing clusters identified as having growth potential for the region, based on the retention data and CWS study described above. With the support of Western Massachusetts Electric Company and First Niagara Bank, the series included sessions focused on photonics, plastics, medical devices, specialized manufacturing and aerospace/defense.
- The EDC developed a renewed focus on logistics in 2011. The region lies at the “Crossroads of New England,” which has historically positioned western Massachusetts to be competitive for regional distribution centers. The EDC has been tracking issues of global importance such as the expansion of the Panama Canal and the rising cost of oil as well as local issues such as the improvements to the CSX rail yard in West Springfield and adding double stack rail capacity from Boston to Albany and beyond. The EDC and AIM (Associated Industries of Massachusetts) held a Logistics Conference on March 29, 2011 to address how regional logistics capacity connects to and supports the global supply chain.
- During the first half of this ten-year period, the Economic Development Council helped develop an affiliate, the Regional Technology Alliance, and its successor, the Regional Technology Corporation. The RTC brought businesses together in cluster networks to collaborate, advocate for, and grow their industries. The RTC sponsored numerous academic-industry showcase events in the Pioneer Valley region in 2005-2008, bringing colleges and universities together with the region’s business and industry representatives.
- The western branch of the Massachusetts Office of Business Development assisted in obtaining investment tax credits for numerous western MA businesses through the state’s Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP). The tax credits allowed these businesses to expand, relocate and expand, or in some cases, move out-of-state operations to Massachusetts. Among others, companies in the Pioneer Valley benefiting from the state tax credits include MassMutual Life Insurance Company, Nash Manufacturing & Grinding Services, and F.W. Webb Company in Springfield and U.S. Tsubaki Power Transmission and Sealed Air Corporation in Holyoke.

- MGM Resorts International has been approved for the single western Massachusetts resort casino permit. The \$800 million MGM proposal was awarded a final permit on June 13, 2014 from the Massachusetts Gaming Commission, to be officially granted once either: 1) the state Supreme Judicial Court did not allow a November ballot question asking voters if the state's 2011 casino law should be repealed or 2) the Court allowed a ballot question and the law is upheld by the voters. The court has since ruled that the ballot question may proceed. Potential benefits that have been projected include permanent job creation of up to 2-3,000 positions, 2,000 temporary jobs, increased visitors and tourism, tax revenue for the Commonwealth and host community, shared benefits for the surrounding communities, and community initiatives and partnerships sponsored by the casino company. See "An Analysis of Regional Economic Conditions – Competitive Advantages" in this report for more details, as well as www.massgaming.com.

Strategy #2: Promote Small Businesses and Generate Flexible Risk Capital

Lead Implementers

- Western Massachusetts Small Business Development Center
- Common Capital
- Business Growth Center at Springfield Technology Park
- Affiliated Chambers of Commerce of Greater Springfield (ACCGS)
- Chambers of Commerce from Hampden, Hampshire and Franklin Counties

Background and Synopsis

Nearly 90 percent of all employers in the region have 20 or fewer employees. In a region once renowned for its large mills and factories, the emergence of an economy characterized by small businesses is noteworthy, although similar to trends occurring nationwide. 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.

The Massachusetts Small Business Development Center Network (MSBDC), part of the University of Massachusetts, has for more than 25 years serviced the small business community with counseling, management training, and information and referral. Its professional staff has counseled thousands of clients throughout the four counties of western Massachusetts, often working through and with chambers of commerce that are increasingly recognized as the backbone of our regional economy. Collaboration between MSBDC, the chambers, and municipal economic development offices will continue to nurture the entrepreneurial community, as will programs such as the Business Incubator at the Scibelli Enterprise Center in the Springfield Technology Park.

In addition, the HIDDEN-TECH network brings together a growing group of individuals using technology to run small businesses out of their homes and private offices. As these businesses not captured in traditional economic data are networked and supported, some will emerge as significant employers.

Major Strategy Accomplishments for 2004-14

- Several major partners collaborated on a Pioneer Valley Growth Business Study, conducted by the UMass Donahue Institute. The study identified industry sectors and businesses that are growing, need capital and will have high community impact, particularly through increased employment. It identified characteristics and challenges of these companies as well as financing and business assistance needs. The partners are: Common Capital, the EDC of Western Massachusetts, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, Mass Growth Capital, MA Small Business Development Center, and MassMutual.
- The Western Massachusetts Enterprise Fund, Inc. (WMEF) changed its name to Common Capital and expanded its mission, programs and services:
 - Common Capital refocused and expanded its business assistance program by expanding partnerships with business advisory consultants to make referrals to clients; researching successful national models for business assistance programs across the country; and collaborating on a regional business growth study.
 - In addition to providing small business microloans, Common Capital now has funds available for operating capital and is seeking loan applications from community projects, nonprofits and larger employers. Common Capital has increased its capital base through a variety of sources and is now providing expanded business advisory services to help match high-impact projects to available capital and facilitate its use for maximum community impact.
 - Common Capital launched its Community First Fund, allowing individuals in the region to invest locally. The Fund announced its first offering and is raising \$500,000 from individuals in Western Massachusetts to finance local businesses. The minimum investment is \$2,500 for three years, and will be paid a guaranteed interest of 2%. Loans are secured by the \$3 million equity of Common Capital.
 - Over the past ten years, Common Capital's lending capacity has increased steadily and now exceeds \$5 million. Annually, the agency originated an average of approximately 24 loans with an average loan size of about \$48,000 (total of \$1.2 million). Common Capital has now made over \$10 million in total loans since 2004 and over \$14 million since its founding in 1990.
- On May 27, 2010, UMass Amherst and STCC announced a partnership to reinvigorate the Springfield Incubator at the Scibelli Enterprise Center (now the Business Growth Center) at the Springfield Technology Park:
 - The Executive Director of Strategic Communications and Outreach at UMass Amherst extended her responsibilities to become director of the Growth Center. The Center conducted a financial sustainability evaluation which resulted in recommendations to take a regional approach to marketing, significantly increase the number of incubator tenants, and provide services outside the walls of the Growth Center to make it more of a regional resource.

- The Business Growth Center became a founding member of ACTION, the Association of Cleantech Incubators of New England, giving it access to a multi-state network of resources, as well as connecting our region with the innovation ecosystem in the Greater Boston area.
- The Business Growth Center was the MA connector node for the regionally awarded i6 Challenge grant creating the Cleantech Innovations New England program. This designation is bringing exposure and opportunity to Western Mass cleantech companies. The Growth Center is providing services to businesses as a subcontractor to ACTION as part of its participation in the i6 Challenge grant. Services include hosting roundtables to emerging cleantech companies, service provider office hours to young businesses, and information sessions for business plan competitions. As a cleantech incubator, the Business Growth Center also now hosts a regular Northeast Cleantech Open Accelerator and Competition information session.
- The Hartford-Springfield Economic Partnership (HSEP) has conducted the Hartford-Springfield Interstate Business Survey every two years to gauge economic conditions, outlooks and views of the business community on a range of key issues confronting the interstate Knowledge Corridor region. The survey is administered by the Connecticut Business & Industry Association and sponsored by the MassMutual Financial Group, Berkshire Bank, the Capitol Region Council of Governments and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.
- The Western Regional Office of the Massachusetts Small Business Development Center (MSBDC) continued to support the small business and entrepreneurial community through services and collaboration with other agencies. From 2004-2014, MSBDC staff met with approximately 600 clients per year and offered an average of 20 management training programs per year in the Pioneer Valley. They also assisted in securing about \$6 million per year in financing to businesses based in the Valley. These services allowed for the creation of a total of over 850 new jobs and the retention of over 1,000 jobs over a ten-year period.
- The Wellspring Collaborative, led by the UMass Amherst Center for Public Policy and Administration, the Center for Popular Economics, and Partners for a Healthier Community in Springfield, worked with the Hampden County Sheriff's Department and York Street Industries to create a Springfield-based upholstery business that is providing training and employment to ex-offenders after they leave the Hampden County Correctional Center.
- The Massachusetts Latino Chamber of Commerce, based in Springfield, was named 2009 Massachusetts Minority Small Business Champion by the U.S. Small Business Administration. This distinction was in honor of the MLCC's special efforts to provide excellent business education opportunities for minority-owned businesses and entrepreneurs. Also honored by the SBA as the Massachusetts Young Entrepreneur was Ray Hernandez of JuJu's Transportation Corp, a MLCC member.

- The Massachusetts Latino Chamber of Commerce celebrated the grand opening of its new Holyoke office. The Holyoke office will better serve members of the growing Latino small business community by providing much needed services such as technical assistance, business planning, legal services, youth business seminars, referrals and much more.
- Franklin County Chamber of Commerce (FCCC) continued to improve methods to reach individuals and small businesses in the “creative economy.” The Chamber collaborated on two projects funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council: “River Culture” in Turners Falls and “Fostering the Arts” with Greenfield Community College, Franklin County Community Development Corporation, and Shelburne Falls Area Business Association.
- Springfield Technical Community College (STCC)’s Entrepreneurial Institute has provided an array of entrepreneurial courses and training programs as well as a Young Entrepreneurial Scholars (YES) program targeted at high school students in the greater Springfield area. These programs continue to serve about 2,000 students per year.
- The Affiliated Chambers of Commerce of Greater Springfield (ACCGS) and MassLive.com, the largest local site for news and information in Western Massachusetts, have developed efficient online advertising tools as well as improved Search Engine Optimization and online marketing for emerging growth companies.
- The Northampton Chamber of Commerce completed the establishment of a Business Improvement District (BID) for downtown Northampton in 2009, with the help of the EDC. The Northampton BID services include enhanced maintenance and beautification programs, expanded marketing and events, parking and transportation initiatives and improved social services and public safety.

Strategy #3: Advocate Efficient Regulatory Processes at all Levels of Government

Lead Implementers

- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
- Municipal planners and planning boards
- Westmass Area Development Corporation (EDC Affiliate)

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.

Streamlining the regulatory permitting process can simultaneously meet our planning goals and the needs of the development community. We will craft a fresh vision that stresses 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.

Major Strategy Accomplishments for 2004-2014

- The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission worked with communities in the region to advance streamlined permitting:
 - Under state expedited permitting law MGL Chapter 43D, PVPC established a regional service center to provide technical assistance on streamlined local permitting practices. Through this process, assisted communities in applying for state 43D priority development site funding. In some cases, PVPC prepared customized local permitting guides.
 - In collaboration with the MA Association of Regional Planning Agencies, PVPC developed a guidebook: A Best Practices Model for Streamlined Local Permitting.
 - The PVPC developed Valley Vision 2, a land use plan that includes Smart Growth tools and model bylaws in a web-based format. The plan received 2008 Medium-Metro Achievement Award from the National Association of Regional Councils

- The PVPC advocated for a number of zoning and regulatory changes that would simplify the development process:
 - Participated in the Massachusetts Zoning Reform Task Force, which is proposing comprehensive zoning updates and revisions.
 - Assisted with updating the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Endangered Species regulations and participated in the public process for DEP's new stormwater regulations.
 - Developed model green building codes that would be relatively consistent across Pioneer Valley communities.
- The PVPC promoted collaboration between land use planners and economic development partners.
 - The MA Economic Development Council (MEDC) and the Western MA EDC's Economic Development Partners co-sponsored a new seminar as part of UMass Extension's Citizen Planner Training Collaborative. The seminar helps explain the roles of planners and economic development staff and how they can be coordinated.
 - The PVPC sponsored a regional "Building Better" forum for builders, bankers, community officials, planners and others to highlight smart growth success stories and opportunities for public-private partnerships.

Strategy #4: Integrate Workforce Development and Business Priorities

Lead Implementer

- Plan for Progress Workforce Development Strategy Team

Background and Synopsis

The Pioneer Valley has a diversified regional economy with a strong base of businesses in health care, education, tourism and retail, and manufacturing. Several industries are considered growth sectors such as medical devices, precision machining and communications and information technology. In addition, over the years, several emerging industry sectors have been identified as sources of potential growth, including but not limited to life sciences and green industry. In order to maintain and grow the businesses in these industries, it is imperative that the workforce development system and the higher education system, especially the community colleges, work as a unit to provide the most effective education, training and workplace readiness programs that will help individuals not only secure employment in these sectors but to also have a clearly defined career path in their chosen occupation.

Local businesses, in dominant sectors and key emerging growth areas, are seeking qualified entry level workers while at the same time seeking advanced training for incumbent workers in areas which can create new niche market opportunities and competitive advantages. Concurrently, there are high levels of unemployment and many individuals who need basic education, language skills and work readiness support. This strategy seeks to address these concerns by helping to develop a diverse and multi-skilled workforce ready to meet the needs of the region's employers.

Major Strategy Accomplishments 2004-2014

- Collaboration between workforce training providers and businesses has increased, resulting in closer to real-time shifts in training to accommodate private sector workforce needs. Major examples include:
 - BayStateWorks grants of over \$500,000 for the region have trained hundreds of workers in health care and manufacturing jobs.
 - The region successfully competed for \$200,000 from the Pathways Out of Poverty program, authorized by the state's Green Jobs Act, to train low-income, minority and non-English-speaking workers for career ladders in the clean energy field.
 - The Healthcare Workforce Partnership of Western Massachusetts, a coalition of 26 educators, health-care providers and workforce development entities, began developing a pipeline of skilled health care workers.

- The REB of Hampden County partnered with the Western Massachusetts Chapter of the National Tooling and Machining Association and other partners to receive state funding to implement the Precision Manufacturing Regional Alliance Project, training workers for high-paying precision manufacturing jobs. The program led to a second round of funding and subsequently to \$750,000 in workforce training assistance to the region's precision manufacturing employers.
- The Franklin Hampshire REB's Middle Skills Manufacturing Initiative has made precision machine training for adults available in the region for the first time in many years. Developed in partnership with Franklin County Tech and GCC, and Franklin-area employers invest \$250,000 of their own money to upgrade the training lab.
- The REB of Hampden County created a new alliance, the Financial and Business Services Workforce Collaborative, to address the issue of a middle skills workforce gap in entry level customer service, call center operators and bank teller job applicants.
- Massachusetts Workforce Competitive Trust Fund grants were awarded to the Hampden REB, Franklin-Hampshire REB and UMass/Amherst for industry sector-based programs to address employer needs in manufacturing and construction trades. One will establish a pre-apprentice program in construction trades in Springfield and Holyoke. same as below? No – federal... Above?
- A \$4.9 million federal grant was awarded jointly to the REB of Hampden County and the Capital Workforce Partners in Connecticut for a health care training program for unemployed individuals with some college education.
- A number of studies were conducted to determine the work skill needed by the region's employers:
 - A summit on the *Skills Gap: Supply and Demand in the Pioneer Valley Economy* was held in November 2012 at Holyoke Community College. The Commonwealth Corporation and New England Public Policy Center of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston presented their new report, "Labor Market Trends in the Pioneer Valley Region," at this event, addressing labor supply, labor demand, and the "pipeline" of workers. A follow-up set of recommendations was released in early 2013
 - Members of the Workforce Strategy Team contracted with the UMass Donahue Institute to conduct a Pioneer Valley Growth Business Study (also mentioned under Strategy #2, Promote Small Businesses and Generate Flexible Risk Capital). This study identifies industry sectors and businesses that are growing and will be employment drivers. It is part of the Sustainable Knowledge Corridor project funded by HUD.
 - The Knowledge Corridor Talent Strategy provides data on workforce needs for the Knowledge Corridor.
- School-to-work internship and externship opportunities were expanded:

- The Pioneer Valley Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Network (PV STEMNET) worked with the regional employment boards to reinvigorate STEM programs. The effort involves working closely with businesses to develop STEM-related programs that provide students with a variety of experiences. For example, the PV STEMNET “wow” project brings STEM professionals into classrooms; brings K-12 students to colleges, businesses, military bases, museums, and other work environments; and fosters attendance of school groups to events such as career fairs and the UMass Science Quest.
- The REB of Hampden County operated a School-to-Career program in which nearly 2,000 students learned about internships, career choices, and more.
- In response to business-identified needs, the Franklin-Hampshire and Hampden Regional Employment Boards were able to get School-to-Work youth development and Adult Basic Education/ESOL training onto the Top Five list of priorities for our region submitted to the Governor, resulting in proposed funding increases for both.
- Greater collaboration has been achieved among the community colleges:
 - A partnership between Springfield Technical and Holyoke Community Colleges, called Training Workforce Options (TWO), was developed and provides specialized training to suit individual companies’ needs.
 - Representatives from the three community colleges and two area workforce boards collaborated on a revised workforce development strategy in 2010. This new strategy led to the development of the Knowledge Corridor Talent Strategy in 2014.

Strategy #5a: Advance and Enrich Early Education at State and Regional Levels

Lead Implementer

- Reading Success by 4th Grade, an initiative of the Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation that builds on the work of Cherish Every Child, an early childhood-focused community effort

Background and Synopsis

Early reading skills are crucial in order for our children to succeed in school and beyond. Children who read proficiently by the time they reach third grade, the critical time when children shift from “learning to read” to “reading to learn,” are more likely to develop the skills needed to succeed in the knowledge-based workforce of the future. They are also more likely to graduate from high school, find jobs with a livable wage and become informed, effective citizens.

A critical component in the acquisition of early literacy skills is access to a high-quality early education, taught by qualified teachers who understand how young children learn. The earliest years of life offer the greatest opportunity to build a strong foundation for our children’s – and our community’s – long-term success. Science tells us that a child’s early experiences have significant effects on brain development and form the basis for life-long learning, behavior and physical and mental health.

Major Strategy Accomplishments for 2004-2014

- On July 31, 2008, the Early Education Strategy’s foremost short-term objective was achieved when the Governor signed An Act Relative to Early Education and Care into law. The new law formally establishes a Universal Pre-K Program, supports strategies to encourage education and health care providers to further their education, and provides a comprehensive overhaul of regulations setting health, safety, and quality standards for all licensed programs. The lead implementers of this strategy at the time assisted in obtaining endorsements and public support for the legislation.
- The Cherish Every Child initiative of the Davis Foundation focused on improving the lives of Springfield children from birth through age five, created a number of programs to bring all members of the community together, including parents, elected and appointed officials, business leaders, the faith community, and organizations serving children and families. The Cherish Every Child Initiative partnered with many members of the early childhood community in the development of a plan for the implementation of universal high quality preschool for all of Springfield’s 3, 4 and 5-year-olds, which is aligned with the ongoing work of the Department of Early Education and Care. This work was the foundation for the current Reading Success by 4th Grade initiative.

- Reading Success by 4th Grade (RS4G), the community-wide initiative that has evolved from the Cherish Every Child initiative, brought the Springfield community together to determine how to move the needle on third grade reading proficiency. A series of recommendations and best practice strategies is set forth in the report, Reading Success by 4th Grade: A Blueprint for Springfield. The community set a goal: by 2016, 80% of Springfield's third graders will read at proficient or above on the English Language Arts MCAS. Among the best practices adapted for Springfield as a result of the research for the Blueprint are:
 - Talk/Read/Succeed! is an early literacy program that unites two Springfield MA Housing authority sites with two city schools. Recognition for the program has come from the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO). The New England Chapter of NAHRO has presented SHA with its 2012 Regional Award for Excellence, and the Massachusetts Chapter of NAHRO awarded an Outstanding Agency award. The Talk/Read/Succeed! program is in its fourth year and has implemented several of the best-practice programs listed below for the 180 targeted families and their children, in addition to the Hasbro Summer Learning Initiative, a four-week experiential learning program with an explicit literacy component.
 - The "Ready! For Kindergarten" program, a series of parenting education workshops based on children's developmental milestones for the first five years of life.
 - The Family Child Care Language & Literacy Project (currently in its fourth year) helps providers build skills to increase children's foundation for literacy and supplies them with books and activities to promote concrete skill development in the young children in their care.
 - "Raising A Reader MA" is an evidence-based early literacy program that seeks to close the academic achievement gap by helping families of young children develop, practice, and maintain habits of reading together at home. Launched in Springfield in September 2012, Raising A Reader MA is currently serving the families of 500 young children in Springfield through partnerships with HCS Head Start, Springfield Housing Authority, the Springfield Pregnant and Parenting Teen Project, and the Springfield Public Schools.
 - "Reach Out and Read" prepares young children for school success by partnering with pediatricians to prescribe books and encourage families to read together. In May 2010, Springfield became a Reach Out and Read Bookend City, with 100% of its eligible pediatric practices implementing the program.
 - The Springfield College Student Success Corps (an AmeriCorps program) is replicating the Minnesota Reading Corps' Pre-K Intervention Model in six classrooms in Springfield. Reading Corps tutors serve more than 100 students at Square One, Margaret C. Ellis Elementary School, and HeadStart.

- In July 2012, Springfield was named an All America City, based on its work in developing and implementing the Reading Success by 4th Grade: Blueprint for Springfield, by the National Civic League, a partner in the Campaign for Grade Level Reading. In addition, as a participant in the Campaign, Springfield was given recognition for its leadership in the national reading proficiency movement and for its efforts to improve student attendance.
- Reading is Power: Leer esPoder!, the Holyoke Early Literacy Initiative (HELI) has come together to address the pervasive gap in early literacy proficiency for Holyoke public schools students. Under the leadership of Mayor Alex Morse, in partnership with the United Way of Pioneer Valley and the Davis Foundation, the group has convened multiple stakeholders to help address this issue. The group has begun the design of the campaign, and has established an aggressive goal, to have 85% of Holyoke 3rd graders reading proficiently by 2014.
- Two local education experts are now serving on the Massachusetts Board of Early Education and Care. Mary E. Walachy, Executive Director of the Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation, was recently appointed to the 11-member board, which Cheryl Stanley, Dean of the Education Department at Westfield State University, joined in 2011. The board oversees policy and spending for pre-school, day care, and early grade school in Massachusetts through the Department of Early Education and Care.

Strategy #5b: Improve and Enrich K to 12 Education

Lead Implementers

- Urban: Urban Core Schools, Step-up Springfield, and ENLACE School Partnership in Holyoke
- Suburban/Rural: K-12 Strategy Team of Plan for Progress

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 kindergarten to 12th-grade education is perhaps our most important and farsighted economic development strategy.

Major Strategy Accomplishments for 2004-2014

- The Springfield Collaboration for Change, a partnership between the Springfield Education Association, Springfield Public Schools, and community organizations including United Way of Pioneer Valley, Davis Foundation, and Pioneer Valley Project, has been implementing a 5-year “Closing the Achievement Gaps” Initiative, which was awarded \$1.25 million from the NEA Foundation in 2010. The program focuses on professional development, parent engagement, and collaboration in six Springfield public schools, including holding more parent-teacher conferences and home visits with all students. The program is raising academic achievement for all students while reducing achievement gaps among Latino/Hispanic, African American and low income students.
- As a community partnership, the Regional Employment Board (REB) of Hampden County, Holyoke Community College, the city of Holyoke and Holyoke Public Schools are working with Holyoke High School through the “Gateway Cities” initiative to create two new National Academy Foundation Career Academies. One academy will be in computer animation; the second will be in business and financial services.
- “Stay in School,” a major community initiative in Springfield, was launched in 2013 at the newly-built Roger L. Putnam Vocational Technical Academy. “Stay in School” is designed to increase student attendance in Springfield schools. The campaign seeks to engage the entire community – schools, students, parents, media, business leaders and others– in reaching out to families and adults responsible for children in Springfield Public Schools to play a role in encouraging daily attendance. The campaign “Show up. Every Day. It Matters. Stay in School” was developed by the United Way, lead agency in the initiative, and Springfield Public Schools. Recently, Springfield Public Schools announced the four-year high school graduation rate had increased from 52.1% in 2011 to 56.6% in 2012. The goal of the “Stay in School” initiative is to increase the graduation rate to 77.4% by the year 2015.

- The Holyoke-based ENLACE (Engaging Latino Communities for Education) partnership brought together Holyoke Community College, Holyoke Public Schools, community organizations, private foundations, and other institutions of higher learning to strengthen educational pathways for Latino students, including early childhood education. In 2007-2008, 58 faculty and staff from HCC, the Holyoke Public Schools and community-based organizations participated in ENLACE programs that served 220 parents, 228 K-12 students, and 103 college students.
- The Pioneer Valley Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Network (PV STEMNET) has developed a five-year strategic plan, addressing goals that mirror those of the statewide plan for excellence in STEM education. The plan is based on cooperation among the Pre-K-12, higher education, business, nonprofit, and government communities. Goals include specific objectives for increasing student interest in STEM, increasing STEM achievement among Pre-K-12 students, increasing the number of available STEM classes, and improving high school graduation rates. PV STEMNET has a new website, www.pvstem.net, featuring a calendar of STEM events, a search option and information about initiatives.
- The PV STEMNET “wow” project brings STEM professionals into classrooms to talk with students about their work. Other activities include visits by K-12 students to colleges, businesses, military bases, museums, and other work environments, visits by college student groups to K-12 classrooms, and attendance of school groups to events such as career fairs and the UMass Science Quest.

Strategy #6: Support Higher Education and Retain Graduates

Lead Implementers

- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
- Hartford-Springfield Economic Partnership
- InternHere.com Board of Directors

Background and Synopsis

According to some estimates, 85 percent of all jobs in the United States require some form of education beyond high school. This is the reality of the “knowledge economy.” If innovation and creativity are the engine of this economy, higher education is the vehicle. Happily, our region already has significant assets with which to prepare our workforce. Over 14,000 students graduate each year from the area’s colleges and universities. The Plan for Progress calls for continued strengthening of our region’s higher education institutions, fostering of greater connections between these public and private institutions and the private sector, and retaining the graduates of those institutions within the region’s workforce.

Major Strategy Accomplishments for 2004-2014

- InternHere.com was successfully launched in April 2005. A project of the Hartford-Springfield Economic Partnership, the program is a web-based system that connects employers with prospective interns at high schools and colleges in the region. Companies can list internship opportunities in a broad range of fields from marketing and finance to engineering and the arts. Since the original launch in 2005, over 19,000 students, representing nearly 400 different colleges and universities, have submitted profiles. Currently over 1,900 employers are currently registered, with 482 positions available. The Western MA EDC is represented on the Internhere.com Board of Directors and has continued to help increase participation by western Massachusetts companies.
- The higher education institutions in the Pioneer Valley collaborated to evaluate and leverage the educational opportunities afforded by the High Performance Computing Center that was constructed in Holyoke in 2012. Numerous successful initiatives have been undertaken in the past two years, including a Technology Career Pathways program that involves HCC and Dean Technical High School, a Virtual Interactive Textbook project in Holyoke and Springfield Middle Schools, and other advances in technology education opportunities, particularly in Holyoke.

- The University of Massachusetts/Amherst established a satellite campus in downtown Springfield in the spring of 2014. UMass opened a welcome center at its new downtown satellite center in Tower Square and began allowing prospective students to register for courses and degree programs before the start of classes September 2, 2014 at the UMass Center at Springfield. The UMass Center at Springfield is the first satellite center for the five-campus University of Massachusetts system. UMass officials said the 40 initial course offerings for the fall semester draw on key industry needs in the region and that additional programs are being explored in partnership with area community colleges. Through the UMass Center at Springfield, the UMass campuses and the community colleges are able to collaborate and bring their special strengths to a variety of programs, including:
 - UMass Amherst will offer programs in elementary and secondary education, a Master of Business Administration, Nursing, Regional Planning and Landscape Architecture, and Architecture and Design.
 - Students will be able to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Studies through a partnership between Holyoke Community College and UMass Dartmouth that includes a two-year associate degree program leading to a bachelor's degree.
 - Springfield Technical Community College and Holyoke Community College will provide seven non-credit training programs through their Training & Workforce Options (TWO) program.
 - With Springfield poised to be the site of a new casino, UMass Boston will offer an Addiction Counselor Education Program including a focus on gambling addiction.
 - UMass Lowell will offer a Master of Science degree in cybersecurity, an academic discipline gaining in popularity amid concerns about identity theft and protecting the privacy of databases.
 - UMass Amherst's University Without Walls, a program to help adults finish their first bachelor's degree, will be part of the UMass Center at Springfield.
 - UMassOnline will provide access to the full array of online courses and degrees offered by the five campuses.
- UMass/Amherst established a Design Center in downtown Springfield in 2010, a product of a successful collaboration between the UMass Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning and the City of Springfield's Office of Planning and Economic Development. Design Studio work has included the creation of a neighborhood plan for the "Old Hill/Six Corners" area, an urban revitalization plan for the "X" neighborhood in Forest Park, and renovations to Pynchon Plaza in Springfield's Central Business District. Part of the Design Center's mission is to provide opportunities for Springfield youth and teens to engage with UMass students, faculty and staff, and the program has held summer programs at the Dunbar YMCA Family and Community Center.

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

Lead Implementers

- Leadership Pioneer Valley (LPV) Steering Committee/Board of Directors

Background and Synopsis

Baby boomers, in 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.

Major Strategy Accomplishments for 2004-2014

- The initial Plan for Progress regional leadership strategy team became the Leadership Pioneer Valley Steering Committee and is now the LPV Board of Directors. The team has developed a 21st-century Leadership Pioneer Valley program that identifies, develops, and connects diverse leaders to strengthen the Pioneer Valley. The nine-month advanced-level curriculum challenges and engages emerging and existing leaders from all sectors of the community—corporate, government, small business, non-profit, and academic—for the benefit of the region. During the program, participants examine critical issues affecting the Pioneer Valley, learn about the region's numerous and diverse communities, and expand their leadership skills while gaining connections, greater commitment to community stewardship, and cultural competency.
- The third full year of Leadership Pioneer Valley was completed in June of 2014, with 34 new graduates, for a total of 114 LPV graduates thus far.
- Graduates of the first two classes reported significant changes as a result of the program: 57% took a new leadership role at work; 53% joined a Board of Directors, and 31% initiated a community project. Several of these graduates also serve on the LPV Steering Committee, and others assist with marketing, fundraising, curriculum, alumni and enrollment activities.
- Each year, participants conduct team projects based on regional issues. Two of the projects have been continued by subsequent classes. Issues addressed by the projects include: potential impacts of a casino; youth leadership programs; expanding markets for locally-produced food; strengthening higher education partnerships; clean energy strategies; and retaining young professionals in the region. Prior to the commencement each year, the teams present their projects, accomplishments and recommendations.
- The LPV Inaugural Class of 2012 created an alumni group that holds numerous events and activities throughout the year, including community outreach opportunities, educational events, and social occasions. Members of the Class of 2013 joined the alumni group in June of 2013, and 2014 graduates are anticipated to significantly expand the group.

112 ❖ Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and Economic Development District

- LPV is in the process of becoming a separate non-profit 501(c)(3) organization and has moved to office space in the Business Growth Center at Springfield Technology Park.

Strategy #8: Market our Region

Lead Implementers

- Economic Development Council (EDC) of Western Massachusetts
- Chambers of Commerce
- Hartford-Springfield Economic Partnership

Background and Synopsis

Our marketing efforts are targeted at potential tourists as well as businesses outside and within our region that are considering moving to or remaining in the Pioneer Valley. 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. The Pioneer Valley and western Massachusetts draws 13 percent of the state's tourism (including Berkshire and Franklin counties) and ranks third, just behind Boston and Cape Cod, as a tourist destination. The economic impact of tourism and regional promotion is felt throughout the state and in the Pioneer Valley through support to local businesses and attractions, sales tax, and property taxes on vacation homes.

Other marketing efforts are aimed at businesses seeking new or additional sites in the Northeast or comparing various sites across the country. These include many international companies, as well. We are engaged in ongoing outreach at trade shows, conferences, and other venues to talk to businesses about the advantages of locating in the Pioneer Valley.

We also need to enhance and expand the internal and external image of the region and its urban core communities of Springfield, Holyoke and Chicopee by conducting ongoing regional identity-building efforts, including publicizing local success stories and releasing relevant research on business and demographic trends that portray an accurate picture of our cities' quality of life, public services, and economic health.

Major Strategy Accomplishments for 2004-2014

- The EDC of Western Massachusetts and the Hartford-Springfield Economic Partnership conducted extensive marketing of the region to businesses, site selectors, and realtors, both nationally and internationally:

- The EDC and its Connecticut counterparts have participated in numerous conferences, conventions and trade shows each year, both national and international, which have led to business investment in the region. Such events include EASTEC, BIOMEDevice, Power Gen Renewables, Medica (in Dusseldorf, Germany), Boston Cleantech Venture Day (meeting with European cleantech companies), the Paris Air Show, the Canadian-American Aerospace and Defense Industry conference, CoreNet corporate real estate summits, and many others.
- The EDC and its partners have also hosted European delegations to our region, several International Business Symposiums, and a roundtable for Boston site selectors. As a result of these efforts, a significant number of American and European companies have invested in real estate or in business partnerships in the Pioneer Valley region. Some of these firms have since visited western Massachusetts and met with local companies to discuss potential partnerships. EDC also met with European site selectors, lead generators and regional economic development officials in November 2012. These sources generate meetings with business contacts and are instrumental in putting western Mass on itineraries for trade missions.
- The EDC has been involved in the state's new marketing campaign designed to attract new businesses and jobs to Massachusetts and to protect those already here from recruitment attempts by competitive states.
- Bradley International Airport has been able to support international flights to Amsterdam for periods of time. They are currently discontinued, but the airport and HSEP partners continually seek to revive international flights.
- The EDC, PVPC, Connecticut Economic Resource Center and regional utilities have worked together to create EDDI (Economic Development Data and Information), an online database of economic and demographic information for Connecticut and western Massachusetts.
- The Greater Springfield Convention and Visitor's Bureau (GSCVB), the EDC, and the Hartford-Springfield Economic Partnership have successfully marketed the region's tourism attractions and convention and meeting capacities:
 - The GSCVB and the EDC worked together to create a new tourism logo and marketing campaign, released in 2005. New design elements were incorporated into all marketing materials including the GSCVB website.
 - In 2013, the GSCVB reported that over a five-year period, visitor spending in the Pioneer Valley had increased by 12.6% (compared to an increase in visitor spending to the state of 9.5%).
 - The new MassMutual Convention Center was completed in 2005, and the region has aggressively pursued the "meetings and conventions" market, with outreach and the www.springfield-first.com website.

- The GSCVB, working with the Sheraton Springfield and Peter Pan Bus Lines, submitted a winning bid to host the American Bus Association's 2010 Top 100 Judging Event. Bright Nights and Tanglewood on Parade were chosen that year. The Big E is also on a new list, called IKE (Internationally Known Events), which is culled from Top 100 favorites.
- In 2013, the GSCVB announced a new Western Massachusetts Sports Commission, intended to attract sports events and sports-related business
- The Three-County Fairgrounds in Northampton completed Phase I of a three-phase expansion and upgrade in 2011, with three new 100-stall horse barns
- The Hartford Springfield Economic Partnership (now known as the Knowledge Corridor Partnership) has restructured after losing Northeast Utilities as a key partner and is continuing to work on joint initiatives and to sponsor the "State of the Region" events.
- The Hampshire County Regional Tourism Council was established by an act of the Legislature in 2010, and its creation was endorsed by the Greater Northampton, Amherst Area and Greater Easthampton chambers of commerce. In 2013, the tourism council unveiled a new logo and slogan, "Hampshire County: The Other Side of Massachusetts" that will be used as part of a marketing campaign to attract visitors. The council is creating new connections for the industry in Hampshire County with international tour operators and travel writers, working with the Greater Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce on a Pioneer Valley imaging campaign, and collaborating with Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture and Museums¹⁰.

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

This strategy is the region's master plan to achieve a revitalized Connecticut River through four categories of recommended action: water quality cleanup, recreation and public access, land use/environmental quality, and economic development. The strategy emphasizes that successful efforts to revitalize the Connecticut River will significantly benefit the region from the direct and positive economic impacts derived from desirable riverfront areas, new amenities such as the Connecticut River Walk and Bikeway, and tourism. In addition, this strategy recognizes that the region's quality of life—especially in its most populous urban core area—will be boosted by long-term efforts to meet federally mandated Class B water standards (i.e., fishable/swimmable water quality) from the Holyoke Dam south to the Massachusetts-Connecticut state line and continuing on to the confluence with Long Island Sound.

Implementation of this strategy is being advanced through a wide array of water quality improvements as well as riverfront-related projects, several of which have made significant progress. In addition, strategy progress continues to be bolstered by 1998 federal government decision to designate the Connecticut River as one of only 14 American Heritage Rivers in the nation. This special honor is one that both the region and this strategy continue to leverage to full advantage. Ideally, implementation of this strategy over a 15- to 20-year time frame will contribute long-term benefits to the region's economy and will ultimately lead to a clean river for the health and enjoyment of current and future generations. Finally, this strategy complements and supports the ongoing revitalization efforts being pursued in the urban core cities of Springfield, Chicopee, and Holyoke.

Major Strategy Accomplishments for 2004-2014

- Over the past decade, the annual volume of untreated combined sewer overflow (CSO) discharged to the Connecticut and other western Massachusetts tributary rivers has been reduced by 1 billion gallons per year.
- Furthermore, over the 20 years from 1993 to 2013, the number of the Connecticut River's combined sewer overflows (CSO) has been reduced by 52% and the volume of CSOs reduced by 60%. This progress has been made through a high degree of intermunicipal collaboration and funding, with a total of \$356 million in federal, state and local construction funds which have created numerous engineering, design and construction jobs.

- Due to improvements in water quality, tourists are now being drawn to the Connecticut River to visit the Jones Ferry River Access Center, the Pioneer Valley Riverfront Club, the Connecticut Riverwalk and the Connecticut River Scenic Byway, and riverfront revitalization has provided new opportunities for the marketing and re-use of downtown riverfront parcels
- The region was awarded a \$1.34 million EPA Targeted Watersheds grant for the tri-state Connecticut River Watershed Initiative. Work has included:
 - Numerous local projects such as completing municipal stormwater utility plans, installing green roofs and storm water management improvements, disconnecting downspouts and sump pumps from sewer systems, and establishing best management practices for public water supplies and agricultural runoff.
 - Establishing a new Connecticut River website, which includes water quality monitoring data, river recreational access maps and data, and regional hiking trails information at www.connecticutriver.us
- PVPC completed work on a NOAA federal grant funded project to develop a blueprint for bi-state cooperation on the lower Connecticut River in Massachusetts and Connecticut, including:
 - Developing an intergovernmental compact to establish a new bi-state Lower Connecticut River Partnership
 - Creating and administering a small grants program of more than a dozen grants to improve recreational access and water quality in the Connecticut River
 - Establishing a web-based riverfront recreation access mapping system for Massachusetts and Connecticut.
- The PVPC completed a Green Infrastructure Plan with an 18-member advisory committee that includes town officials, MassDOT and MassDEP representatives, and design consultants. The plan, part of the larger bi-state Sustainable Knowledge Corridor Project, explores the benefits of and opportunities for capturing rain near where it falls with green infrastructure stormwater management facilities, including bioretention systems/rain gardens, infiltration systems, green roofs, and porous asphalt. The plan also recommends programs and policies to help promote green infrastructure practices.
- PVPC conducted a “Think Blue” public education campaign about preventing stormwater pollution and worked with communities to develop organic land care projects at municipal parks.
- PVPC conducted four years of *E. coli* bacteria monitoring along the main stem of the Connecticut River at recreational access locations under a DEP ARRA grant. Bacteria monitoring and source tracking was also performed on 10 major tributaries to the Connecticut River. This information is posted at www.connecticutriver.us.

Strategy #10: Enhance High-Tech and Conventional Infrastructure

Lead Implementers

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

Background and Synopsis

Enhancing all forms of infrastructure – from our roads, buses, sewer lines, and energy services to commercial space, broadband Internet, and cellular technology – will have a far-reaching impact on the quality of life for our residents and on the economic health of our businesses. The Plan for Progress has placed a strong emphasis on improving rail infrastructure in the Pioneer Valley, with connections both north-south and east-west. Improved access along the north-south Knowledge Corridor is the first priority for the region, and efforts will be focused to work with Connecticut toward upgraded Amtrak rail service and potentially future commuter rail service from New Haven to Springfield and ultimately to the Vermont line.

High-technology infrastructure has become an increasingly critical component 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. Sections of Springfield boast an extraordinary telecommunications infrastructure, which the region has used and continues to use to market western Massachusetts as an advanced telecommunications and information technology hub. The Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts uses this asset to retain and recruit technology-intensive businesses and institutions and to help further their competitiveness through the strategic application of telecommunications resources. These resources are well suited to businesses and institutions that rely heavily on back office or toll-free telephone marketing operations, such as banks, brokerage firms, insurance companies, mail-order companies, and related software and hardware firms.

However, at the same time, other nearby urban areas as well as many rural communities do not have access to advanced telecommunications services, or have access at an unaffordable cost and with limited network redundancy to ensure reliability. Without access to affordable, advanced telecommunications services, businesses and residents in the region are at a competitive disadvantage in the global marketplace.

Major Strategy Accomplishments 2004-2014

- Major passenger rail improvements in the Knowledge Corridor have been under construction since 2012, with funding obtained from the federal American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) under the High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail Program, along with state matching funds. Total ARRA funds are \$73 million for Massachusetts and \$160 for Connecticut, with an additional \$17 million from MassDOT and \$26 million in Connecticut state funding.
 - The Knowledge Corridor Passenger Rail Feasibility Study, prepared by HDR Engineering, Inc. of Boston, was completed in 2009. The research and ongoing assessments conducted by HDR and PVPC during the course of the study provided the basis for the application for federal stimulus funding for the \$73 million Amtrak rail project in the Massachusetts portion of the Knowledge Corridor.
 - The “Knowledge Corridor – Restore Vermonter” project includes upgrading the entire Massachusetts portion of the line from Connecticut to New Hampshire. Pan Am Southern Railroad is conducting the rail line upgrades, which involves complete track replacement, grade crossing upgrades, signal rehabilitation, bridge repairs, and platform construction in Northampton and Greenfield. This will allow the realignment of service to the original route, with stops in Holyoke, Northampton and Greenfield.
 - In Connecticut, rail work includes the construction of double tracking from Newington to New Britain, with several new stations and a bus connection to Bradley International Airport. The upgrades will allow for more frequent Amtrak service from Massachusetts to Connecticut and New York City and ultimately for commuter rail service from Springfield to New Haven.
 - The City of Holyoke received \$2 million in MassWorksInfrastructure funds to construct a rail platform to access the futureVermonter passenger rail service. Design and engineering was completed using federal funds through the Sustainable Knowledge Corridor project, as the platform was not planned at the time of the ARRA investment
 - The state of Massachusetts completed final negotiations with CSX Corporation for ownership of the rail tracks and control of operations along the Framingham/Worcester commuter rail line. The state immediately increased commuter rail service between Worcester and Boston, with 20 round trips per day. MassDOT is currently conducting a study of the upgrades and improvements needed for a new inland corridor that will allow for commuter and high-speed rail service from Springfield to Boston
- Progress has been made on the construction of new multi-modal transportation facilities to serve the regional transit authorities, Amtrak and inter-city bus service.
 - The Holyoke Transportation Center was completed in 2010, providing a transit hub as well as information booth and ticket center, day care, and adult education classes. The \$9 million project is a renovation of the former Holyoke Fire Department Headquarters building.

- The John W. Olver Transit Center was dedicated in Greenfield in 2012. The \$15 million Center is the first net-zero energy intermodal transportation facility in the nation. The 22,000-square-foot Olver Transit Center serves as a hub for the Franklin Regional Transit Authority and is also the new home of the Franklin Regional Council of Government offices. A new passenger rail platform has been designed at the site and will be constructed in 2014.
- \$51 million in funding was obtained for Phase I of the new Union Station Regional Intermodal Transportation Center, and work is under way. Demolition of an unusable parking garage was completed in 2013, and asbestos removal is being conducted in the baggage warehouse prior to demolition. Other environmental and structural issues are being addressed, and restoration of the main terminal interior has begun.
- The Massachusetts DOT and CSX Transportation, Inc. completed bridge work necessary to allow double-stack intermodal trains along the Pan Am Southern rail line's Patriot Corridor (Albany NY to eastern MA). This provides faster, more efficient, and more economical freight rail service to and from the region, reducing the number of trucks on highways. CSX is also investing in improvements and expansion at the West Springfield rail yard in conjunction with these efforts.
- The Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) has fully implemented MassBroadband 123 and is now facilitating universal access:
 - In 2008, Governor Patrick signed legislation to establish and fund the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI), including \$40 million for investment in broadband infrastructure for underserved areas (mostly western MA). The legislation was largely proposed and advocated for by Pioneer Valley Connect and Berkshire Connect (now Western MA Connect).
 - As a result of efforts by Pioneer Valley Connect, Berkshire Connect, and the Massachusetts Broadband Institute, MA DOT installed a 55-mile conduit of state-of-the-art fiber optic communications cable simultaneously with a new ITS surveillance system to serve the I-91 corridor. Additional conduit was installed that will be available for lease to private providers in the future. This work provided the fiber-optic "backbone" for the MassBroadband123 project.
 - The MBI obtained \$45.4 million in federal economic stimulus funds, matched with \$26.2 million in state funds, for the \$71.6 million MassBroadband 123 project, which was completed in 2013. The project involved installation of a 1,200-mile, high-speed fiber optic network throughout western Massachusetts, serving over 120 communities. It is connected to the major Internet Point of Presence in Springfield and includes direct service to 1,200 community institutions such as schools, libraries, and municipal buildings. This is a "middle mile" network, which is open-access to allow any broadband provider to connect and offer their services to residential and business customers.

- The MBI has increased broadband access through broadband adoption programs for veterans and small businesses and through grant funding to various entities in the region working to develop and implement “last-mile” broadband access. Additional efforts are ongoing to provide access to and encourage adoption by all residents of the Commonwealth.

Strategy #11: Develop an Array of Housing Options

Lead Implementer

- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)
- Valley Development Council (VDC)
- Pioneer Valley Regional Housing Plan Advisory Committee

Background and Synopsis

Housing is one of the most significant expenditures families and individuals face. Despite the relative availability and affordability of housing in the Pioneer Valley as compared to other areas of the state, a disparity still exists between the number of “affordable” housing units (according to existing guidelines) and the number and location of residents in need of such housing. In order to prevent 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.

Major Strategy Accomplishments for 2004-2014

- The Valley Development Council, an association of public officials, planners, builders, banks, and realtors, took on the role of lead implementer for this strategy from 2007 through 2011. Subsequently, the Pioneer Valley Regional Housing Plan Advisory Committee became the lead implementer through working with PVPC on a regional housing plan.
- In 2010-11, the PVPC prepared two Data Digests on housing issues, one on the home foreclosure crisis in the region and one on overall housing statistics, including owner-occupied vs. rental. The data digests are available at http://www.pvpc.org/resource_center/publications.shtml.
- The PVPC hosted a Pioneer Valley Summit on Fair Lending and Financial Literacy in 2005 to provide an update on fair lending and mortgage refinancing in the region since publication of the 2003 report, *Ownning a Place to Call Home: An Analysis of Fair and Subprime lending in the Springfield Metropolitan Area*. The summit provided a forum for presentation of a new proposed strategy for regional financial literacy and fair lending.
- The PVPC completed a Pioneer Valley Regional Housing Plan in partnership with an Advisory Committee, as part of Sustainable Knowledge Corridor project, funded by a HUD Sustainable Communities grant. The Advisory Committee, including VDC members, participated in identifying critical housing issues, opportunities and challenges, as well as reviewing proposed recommendations. As part of the planning process, the PVPC also collected quantitative data; reviewed existing municipal, regional, and state plans; and interviewed key stakeholders in the region.

- The Valley Development Council and PVPC, together with the Western Massachusetts chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) sponsored a “Smart Growth and Re-Use Design Ideas Competition” in 2009-10 to encourage new ideas for redevelopment of downtown and village center sites in the region. Funding was obtained from various sources including the American Planning Association, and cash prizes were awarded for three different winning designs.

Strategy #12: Endorse a Regional Approach to Public Safety

Lead Implementers

- Western Region Homeland Security Council
- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

Background and Synopsis

Our entire region suffers when any neighborhood is at a high risk of 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 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.

Major Strategy Accomplishments for 2004-2014

- The PVPC has worked consistently on emergency and disaster preparedness efforts with MEMA, the Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council and the state Office of Public Safety. Work has included planning for communication, mass care and shelter, and/or potential evacuation in the event of an emergency or disaster.
 - PVPC completed a regional emergency sheltering plan, in partnership with the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), the other western Massachusetts Regional Planning Agencies, the Office on Disability, the Department of Public Health, the Western Massachusetts Homeland Security Agency, and the American Red Cross. The plan will coordinate activation of emergency shelters and provision of supplies and personnel.
 - PVPC worked with MEMA to research and assess communication with the public in the event of and during a local and/or regional emergency incident or disaster. Recommendations regarding public alert systems and emergency responder communications have been made to the Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council.

- PVPC also worked in cooperation with the Berkshire Regional Planning Agency and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments to develop a Regional Evacuation Plan for Western Massachusetts. The plan identifies the primary, secondary, and tertiary routes to be used in the event of an evacuation as well as a number of resources to be used by local and regional emergency managers.
- A proposal was developed for a regional lock-up facility that would relieve individual municipal police departments of this function, freeing up critical local police resources.
- The PVPC developed a Pioneer Valley Regional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan and worked with individual communities to develop local hazard mitigation plans.

Strategy #13: Champion Statewide Fiscal Equity

Lead Implementers

- State and Federal Legislative Delegations
- Mayors and Chief Elected Officials
- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
- Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts

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 campaign designed to achieve fiscal equity to ensure that Pioneer Valley taxpayers are treated equitably relative to residents living elsewhere in the commonwealth.

Major Strategy Accomplishments for 2004-2014

- A new formula for the distribution of local aid was developed in collaboration with the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston's New England Public Policy Center. The formula was included in the Governor's FY14 budget which proposes an increase in general local aid that would place greater weight on each city or town's ability to raise its own revenue. The budget proposal allocates level funding for Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA), with an additional \$31 million to be distributed through a new "Annual Formula Local Aid" Program. The new formula only applies to that portion of the funding above the FY13 level and is separate from other sources of local aid such as school and transportation funding. Local distribution amounts would be calculated using a combined measure of property values and income to calculate each municipality's relative ability to provide essential local services. The formula would provide a more equitable distribution of local aid without reductions for any communities.
- The PVPC has consistently advocated for equity in transportation and transit funding so that the Pioneer Valley receives monies for road and bridge projects as well as public transit resources equivalent to our size within the state.
- Representatives from the region worked vigorously with representatives from the state to welcome and leverage the new Green High Performance Computing Center in downtown Holyoke. As a result of the region's efforts, including a very active Innovation District Task Force, state investment has been maximized and many ancillary activities are under way (see Strategy #15).
- The region's leaders succeeded in advocating for state capital investments here, for example the new \$110 million State Data Center in downtown Springfield, significant

state investment in the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center, and the UMass Satellite Center in Springfield.

Strategy #14: Develop A Green Regional Economy

Lead Implementers

- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
- Western Massachusetts Electric Company
- National Grid
- Columbia Gas of Massachusetts
- Holyoke Gas and Electric
- Westfield Gas and Electric
- Chicopee Electric Light Department
- Municipal Planners

Background and Synopsis

The context for this strategy, which was developed in 2010 and revised in 2012, is derived from the nexus of three very important initiatives that have occurred over the past several years. First, Governor Patrick's clean energy agenda, which includes the Green Communities Act of 2008 and other innovative programs and policies to save energy and create jobs, has had a significant impact across the Commonwealth. Massachusetts is at the forefront of new developments in renewable energy, clean technology, and energy efficiency. At the end of 2011, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts was named number one in the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy's (ACEEE) annual state-by-state energy efficiency scorecard. This ranking identifies Massachusetts as having the most aggressive energy efficiency programs in the nation.

Second, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission initiated a Clean Energy Planning process by analyzing barriers to siting clean energy projects in the Pioneer Valley and inventorying emerging clean energy efforts. The planning process was steered by the Pioneer Valley Renewable Energy Collaborative in cooperation with the PVPC and numerous participants to establish a path to a clean energy future for the region. As a result of the planning effort, the following four goals were established:

- 1) Reduce our region's energy consumption to 2000 levels by the end of 2009 and reduce that by 15% between 2010 and 2020.
- 2) Site sufficient new capacity to generate 214 million KWHs of clean energy annually in the Pioneer Valley by the end of 2009 and another 440 million KWHs by the end of 2020.

- 3) Reduce our region's greenhouse gas emissions by 80% below year 2000 levels by 2050.
- 4) Create local jobs in the clean energy sector

Third, the city of Holyoke was selected as the host city for a unique collaboration of world class universities and public and private partners that will provide unparalleled computing power for M.I.T., University of Massachusetts, Boston University, Northeastern University, and Harvard University. The Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center will generate a significant infusion of capital in downtown Holyoke. The siting of this project was the genesis of a collaborative effort by the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, HDR Decision Economics, Fairfield Index Inc, and the Dukakis Center at Northeastern University to develop the Innovation-Based Economic Development Strategy for Holyoke and the Pioneer Valley. Among the specific and measurable economic development strategies is a strategy focused on Clean Energy Innovation and Development. This strategy build's on Holyoke's unique assets and the region's clean energy strengths to position the region as a leader in clean energy production, adoption of energy efficiency and conservation measures, and new products and services. The two objectives of this strategy include:

- 1) Maintain Holyoke's low cost, renewable energy based competitive advantage by expanding Holyoke's portfolio of cost effective renewable energy generating capacity
- 2) Become a global leader in clean energy research and applications, energy efficiency and management through innovative technology based testing and development of products.

In addition to the emergence of these three major initiatives providing a significant catalyst to an already established presence of clean energy and sustainable businesses, the region continues to focus on expanding and creating competitive advantages. Because Massachusetts, like most of the U.S., is dependent on fossil fuels for energy, and because the state has no oil, coal or natural gas supplies of its own, businesses and residents must pay premium prices for fuel and electricity. Furthermore, the combustion of fossil fuels for electric power generation, transportation, heating and other uses is releasing "greenhouse" gases at a rapidly increasing rate. These factors support a significant investment in the growth of the clean energy sector, which includes renewable energy research and development, renewable energy facilities, energy efficiency, and demand response.

Major Strategy Accomplishments for 2010-2014

- The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), in partnership with the Capitol Region Council of Governments of Hartford, has nearly completed implementation of a \$4.2 million Regional Sustainable Communities Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Regional, Pioneer Valley-wide plans have been completed for three areas affecting the green economy: Green Infrastructure; Climate Action and Clean Energy; and Sustainable Environment. These plans and others comprising the full project are available at www.sustainableknowledgecorridor.com. The project also includes a bi-state Action Plan that incorporates sustainability principles.

- The Scibelli Enterprise Center (Business Growth Center) is providing services to clean energy businesses as a subcontractor to the Association of Cleantech Incubators of New England (ACTION) as part of its participation in the i6 Challenge grant creating the Cleantech Innovations New England program. Services include hosting roundtables to emerging cleantech companies, service provider office hours to young businesses, and information sessions for business plan competitions. This designation as an ACTION incubator has brought exposure and opportunity to Western Mass cleantech companies.
- PVPC assisted municipalities to become state-designated Green Communities, which now include 15 of the 43 communities in Hampden and Hampshire Counties.
- The PVPC produced a 12-page report titled “Clean and Renewable Energy: Fueling the Pioneer Valley Economy” in 2013. The report documents and analyzes the region’s clean and renewable energy projects, initiatives and capacity. The report is available in hard copy or at www.pvpc.org under Publications – Regional Information and Policy Center.
- The University of Massachusetts held four annual Clean Energy Connections conferences in downtown Springfield, attended by 4-500 participants each year. The conferences addressed business trends in energy efficiency; clean energy regional innovation clusters; large-scale energy conservation projects; financing for clean energy businesses; lessons learned from laboratory to market; community energy projects; and clean energy workforce development.
- The PVPC completed a Pioneer Valley Clean Energy Plan in 2008 which garnered a 2009 Innovation Award from the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO).
- Numerous clean energy accomplishments related to the Holyoke Gas & Electric Company and the Massachusetts Green High Performing Computing Center are detailed under the Clean Energy section of the Annual Reports for the Holyoke Innovation District at www.innovateholyokey.com.

Strategy #15: Innovation-Based Economic Development Strategy for Holyoke and the Pioneer Valley Region

Background

New in 2012, the Innovation-Based Economic Development Strategy for Holyoke and the Pioneer Valley Region grew out of a collaborative regional partnership to leverage economic growth from the creation of the new Massachusetts Green High-Performance Computing Center in downtown Holyoke. The project developed an action-oriented economic development strategy for the City of Holyoke and the entire Pioneer Valley region, with a detailed implementation framework.

The key goals from the Innovation-Based Economic Development Strategy for Holyoke and the Pioneer Valley Region have been adopted by the Plan for Progress Coordinating Council and incorporated into the Plan. The following summary consists of brief excerpts of the work that was funded by the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative and prepared by HDR Decision Economics with subcontractors Fairfield Index, Inc. and the Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern University. The full report, with a detailed section analyzing baseline conditions and opportunities, is available at www.innovateholyokey.com. Two new strategies have been added since the document was published: “Local and Creative Economy” and “Passenger Rail.” Please note that the strategies are numbered here according to their place in the full report (strategies begin at Section 4.3 and end at 4.12)

The construction of the Massachusetts Green High-Performance Computing Center (MGHPCC, at www.mghpcc.org) was completed in November 2012. The MGHPCC represents a unique collaboration of world-class universities, and public and private partners that will provide unparalleled computing power for M.I.T., University of Massachusetts, Boston University, Northeastern University, and Harvard University. It is a major investment in downtown Holyoke of \$168 million in buildings and equipment, and attracted \$5 million of investment from Cisco and EMC.

At the request of the Patrick Administration, a collaborative regional partnership to leverage economic growth from the creation of MGHPCC took place over the course of 2009-2011 in the form of the Holyoke Innovation District Task Force (www.innovateholyokey.com). The John Adams Innovation Institute of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC) was charged with facilitating the development of an Innovation-Based Economic Development Strategy for Holyoke and the Pioneer Valley. MTC engaged a consulting team, led by HDR Decision Economics with subcontractors Fairfield Index, Inc. and the Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern University, to lead the research and strategy development.

The ultimate goals of this initiative extend well beyond the MGHPCC facility. In fact, this initiative can be viewed as an example of the state’s Gateway City economic strategy to boost economic opportunities in economically distressed, formerly industrial cities in the Commonwealth outside of the core Boston metropolitan area. The hypothesis is that this leading-edge facility can become a catalytic economic

development project for the City of Holyoke and broader region leading to additional industry opportunities and ultimately job opportunities and economic growth.

Major Strategy Accomplishments for 2012-2014

Detailed descriptions of the accomplishments for this strategy can be found at www.innovateholyokey.com under Annual Reports.

2014 CEDS Projects

The Project Proposal Process

On an annual basis, the Pioneer Valley Economic Development District that has been designated by the U.S. Economic Development Administration solicits proposals from the region for projects that may seek funding under the EDA's Public Works Economic Development Program. The region has been successful in prior years in receiving substantial EDA funding awards for projects that create jobs and stimulate private investment in distressed communities of the Pioneer Valley region. Among these awards and accomplishments are the following:

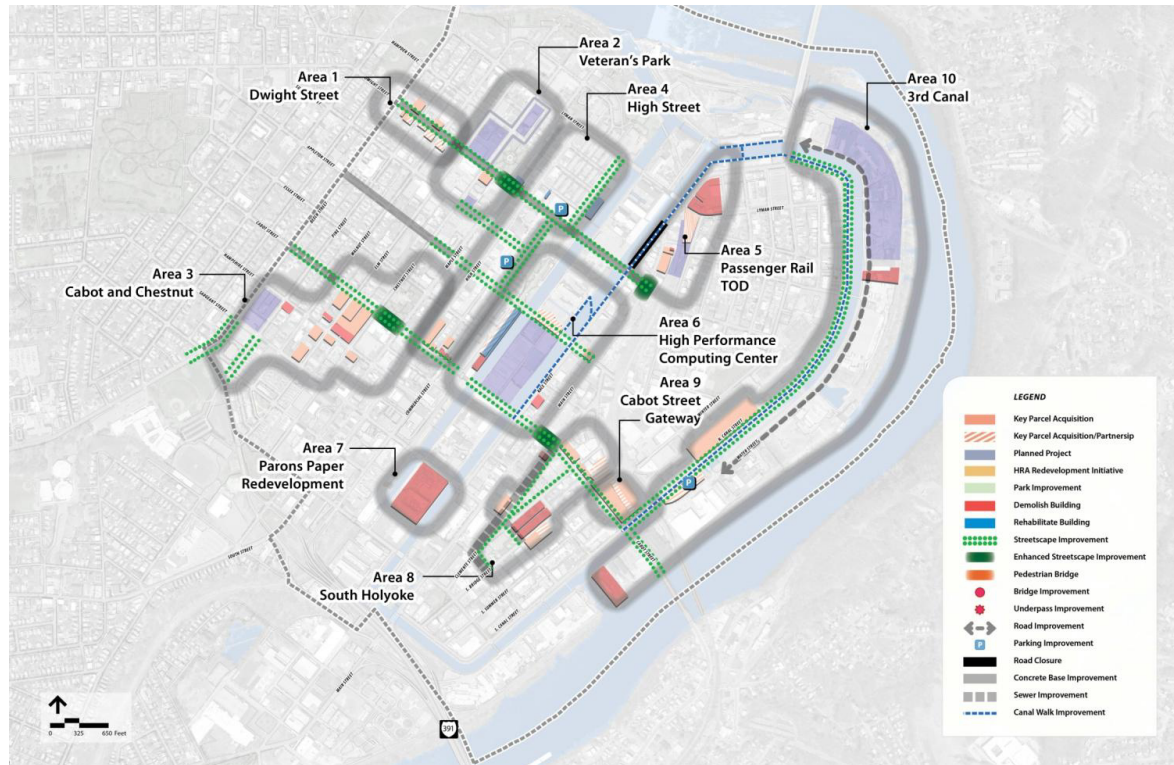
- In 2011, the Holyoke Gas & Electric Company was awarded \$2.1 million for hydroelectric infrastructure improvements that will support the development of the Holyoke Innovation District anchored by the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center.
- In 2011, EDA awarded the Caring Health Center in Springfield \$500,000 for a new community health center in downtown Springfield, in renovated historic buildings.
- In 2010, the Western Massachusetts Enterprise Fund was awarded \$500,000 from the EDA towards a Western Massachusetts Revolving Loan Fund.
- In 2008, EDA awarded the City of Northampton and MassDevelopment \$750,000 for the Village at Hospital Hill Business Park, a redevelopment of a former state hospital site.
- In 2006, EDA awarded the City of Springfield \$1 million for the Memorial Industrial Park II project adjacent to the Smith and Wesson facilities.
- Holyoke Health Center and Medical Mall was awarded a \$1 million grant by EDA in August 2002 to complete Phase II of the project.
- STCC received the EDA's National Award for Excellence in Urban Economic Development in 2001.
- The Latino Professional Office Center in Holyoke was awarded \$700,000 in 1999.
- STCC's Springfield Enterprise Center received close to \$1 million in 1999.

Summary of Project Proposals

This year, proposals were submitted from five Pioneer Valley communities – Springfield, Holyoke, Northampton, Chicopee, and Ludlow – for inclusion in the 2014 CEDS. After a review of the projects by the Plan for Progress Coordinating Council, 14 proposed projects have been included on the 2014 CEDS listing. Several of the projects are located in communities that meet EDA Distress Criteria, and several may meet EDA eligibility criteria due to their potential for providing jobs to residents of distressed communities. All 14 projects are shown in Table 17, and further details are included in Appendix A. Projects included in this list may be applying for EDA Public Works funding during the upcoming year. The top regional priorities in 2014, based on their readiness to proceed and/or critical importance to the region, are highlighted on the following pages:

1) Regional High Priority Projects in Locations Meeting EDA Distress Criteria:

City of Holyoke– Holyoke Innovation District



Connect. Construct. Create.

A Plan for the Revitalization of Center City Holyoke

Located in the Center City area of Holyoke around the new Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center (MGHPCC), the Holyoke Innovation District (HID) is at the core of the Innovation-Based Economic Development Strategy for the Pioneer Valley. The Innovation-Based Strategy has ten core strategies, and the City of Holyoke is the lead on the Site Ready/Policy Ready strategy. The goal of this strategy is to create site ready conditions for attracting new economic development activity in the HID through a combination of prioritizing sites, clearing and remediating selected abandoned sites, and providing the permitting and incentives to facilitate reuse of sites and buildings.

The MGHPCC is seen as a catalytic economic development project for the City of Holyoke and broader region, and this project focuses on the redevelopment of several industrial sites adjacent to the Computing Center. The properties are along Appleton and Sargeant Streets and are known as Area 6 and Area 7 of the Holyoke Redevelopment Authority's (HRA) Urban Renewal Plan – “*Connect. Construct. Create. A plan for the revitalization of Center City Holyoke.*” The redevelopment of this area is also in line with the mission of the HRA to eliminate blighted conditions that inhibit neighborhood reinvestment; improve the quality of life in neighborhoods; foster and promote business expansion and job creation, and maintain and attract development that will revitalize Holyoke's economy and cultural growth while making the community more attractive, prosperous, and self-sufficient.

Area 6 focuses on redeveloping properties that abut the MGHPCC for innovative high- tech businesses, market-rate housing for employees of those companies, and for live/work housing to support the nearby concentration of artists. Also capitalizing on the investment of the MGHPCC,

actions in the area include streetscape improvements and the extension of the Canalwalk along Race Street. Additional actions support the redevelopment of 200-218 Race Street, by acquiring and aggregating adjacent vacant parcels for parking and building access.

Area 7 is the 4.5 acre former Parson Paper property. Actions include site acquisition, hazardous material remediation, completing the demolition of the existing building and selling of the site for commercial and/or industrial reuse. Redevelopment plans include incorporating historic and cultural considerations.

The HID is feeding off of other investments that are reshaping Holyoke's Center City including: construction of Canalwalk Phase II, the new passenger rail platform, renovations at Veteran's Park, a newly renovated and expanded Public Library, parking improvements and numerous private investments.

2) Regional High Priority Projects Intended to Serve Areas Meeting EDA Economic Distress Criteria:

Town of Ludlow - Ludlow Mills – Riverside Drive



One of the largest brownfield mill redevelopment projects in New England, Ludlow Mills Preservation and Redevelopment Project is located adjacent to the downtown and residential areas of Ludlow as well as to the Town of Wilbraham and the City of Springfield's Indian Orchard neighborhood. The Ludlow Mills are located in the Ludlow Village Historic District listed on the State and National Register of Historic places and is within one mile of Massachusetts Turnpike's Exit 7. This 170-acre site contains over 50 historic mill buildings with a total of 1.4 million square feet, as well as over 60 acres of developable woodland in the eastern portions of the project.

Westmass, in cooperation with the Town of Ludlow, is undertaking the conversion of this 19th-century mill complex to create a modern mixed-use development that will combine residential, office, retail, commercial, and industrial uses. It will also provide greenspace for the community in the form of a Riverwalk along the Chicopee River and 50 permanently protected acres of open space including riparian areas. The preliminary design for Riverside Drive and its associated infrastructure is under way and matching funds are in place for pending submittal to EDA for an Investment in Public Works grant. This project would open up numerous areas of the project site to current and future redevelopment opportunities.

The redevelopment of this historic complex over a twenty year period is projected to create 2,000 jobs, result in \$200 to \$300 million in private investment, and increase in annual property tax revenues by \$2 million. In addition, up to 250 housing units will be created including senior independent affordable housing. Recently the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection included the Ludlow Mills in its third round of Brownfields Support Initiative projects with the objective of providing further state level interdepartmental technical as well as financial support.

City of Northampton – Three County Fairground Redevelopment



This project involves the design engineering and construction of off-site infrastructure improvements as part of Phase II of the Fairgrounds Redevelopment Master Plan, including construction of a year-round Exhibition Building. Redevelopment of the Three County Fairgrounds will transform 55 acres of underutilized and deteriorated exhibition space into a state of the art exhibition facility targeting niche shows that will complement Northampton's identity as a cultural and tourism destination, attract new shows to the region, and allow existing shows to expand. The multi-phase project has been projected to generate up to 600 new jobs regionally, retain 462 jobs regionally, generate \$19.5 million in new direct spending in the regional economy, increase annual events from 28 to 68, and generate spinoff economic benefits in the tourism, hospitality, and event production industries in the region.

Job creation and retention will take place in several industry sectors including event production, trades, wholesale trade and distribution, cultural and entertainment, restaurant, hospitality, and retail. Event attendees and exhibitors frequently use hotels in Hampshire and Hampden Counties for Three County Fairground events, and hotel occupancy outside of Northampton is expected to increase as a result of the expansion/redevelopment. A market analysis projected that increased visitation could result in repeat visits to the region, spinoff business development, and trade show events would draw executives from a broad cross-section of industries which could benefit long-term business development and recruitment in the region.

Detailed project proposals submitted by individual communities, including projects of medium to medium-high priority, are presented in Appendix A of this CEDS Annual Report.

Table 16: Summary of EDA Public Works Project Proposals for the 2014 CEDS Annual Update

PVPC Community	Proposed Project Title	Project Type	Local Priority Ranking	Regional Priority Rankings	2013 Project Re-Submittal?	EDA Funding Needed in 2014-2015?	Total Estimated Project Cost	Local \$ Match in Place?	# Perm.JobsCreated
PROJECTS MEETING EDA ECONOMIC DISTRESS CRITERIA:									
Springfield Proposed Projects									
Springfield	Mason Square Supermarket	Infrastructure improvements	High	TBD	No	TBD	\$12 million	No	To be determined
Springfield	Gunn Block Area Redevelopment	Mixed-use redevelopment	High	TBD	No	TBD	\$2.6 million	No	15
Springfield	Gas Blast Planning Area	Redevelopment of neighborhood damaged by natural gas explosion	High	TBD	No	TBD	To be determined	No	To be determined
Springfield	Union Station Regional Intermodal Transportation Center	Redevelopment as regional transportation facility w/office and commercial space	Medium	TBD	Yes	Yes	\$75 million	Yes	To be determined
Springfield	Maple/Union Redevelopment Project	Rehabilitation and redevelopment	Med/Low	TBD	No	TBD	\$1.8 million	No	8
Holyoke Proposed Projects									
Holyoke	Holyoke Innovation District	Redevelopment of former industrial sites around MGHPCC	High	TBD	Yes	TBD	TBD	No	To be determined
Holyoke	Transit-Oriented Development	Infrastructure improvements around passenger rail platform	High	TBD	Yes	TBD	TBD	No	To be determined
Holyoke	Victory Theater	Redevelopment of historic theater in downtown	High	TBD	Yes	TBD	\$28 million	No	To be determined
Holyoke	Lynch School Redevelopment	Redevelopment of vacant school building	High	TBD	Yes	TBD	TBD	No	To be determined

(Continued next page)

Table 16: Summary of EDA Public Works Project Proposals for the 2014 CEDS Annual Update (continued)

PROJECTS INTENDED TO SERVE AREAS MEETING EDA ECONOMIC DISTRESS CRITERIA:									
Northampton Proposed Projects									
Northampton	Three County Fairground Redevelopment	Redevelopment of exhibition facility	High	TBD	Yes	Yes	\$38 million	Partially	To be determined
Ludlow Proposed Project									
Ludlow	Ludlow Mills-Riverside Drive	Redevelopment of historic mill complex as mixed use	High	TBD	Yes	Yes	\$5.6 million	Yes	2,300
Chicopee Proposed Projects									
Chicopee	RiverMills at Chicopee Falls	Redevelopment as mixed-use neighborhood	High	TBD	Yes	Yes	\$25 million	No	50
Chicopee	Westover Air Park South	Development and infrastructure for 88-acre industrial park	High	TBD	No	To be determined	\$73.5 million	No	50
Chicopee	West End Canal District/Cabotville	Brownfields redevelopment as mixed-use	Medium	TBD	Yes	Yes	\$35 million	No	35-50

AN EVALUATION OF OUR PERFORMANCE

The vision statement of the 2004 Plan for Progress imagined a Pioneer Valley that “attracts national recognition.” The Plan for Progress Trustees did not include this phrase as a flourish, but insisted that the vision statement espouse a lofty and measurable long-term objective. Consistent with that priority, the members of the Plan for Progress Trustees and Coordinating Council have asked that a rigorous process be employed each year to

measure the effectiveness of our performance towards the achievement of the Plan’s goals. This process

includes an assessment of strategy team accomplishments, evaluation of the planning and implementation process, and objective performance indicators.



Abandoned Building Brewery, Easthampton
Photo: Ed Cohen

MOUs with Strategy Team Lead Implementers

During the period of 2004-2014, The Plan for Progress Coordinating Council developed a series of formal Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) for the lead implementers of each of the strategies. Each MOU states that the Plan for Progress Trustees and Coordinating Council will maintain and keep current the Plan for Progress as the Pioneer Valley’s comprehensive strategic economic development plan, provide suggested short- and long-term strategy milestones, provide meetings and other forums, and measure and periodically report on the programs and progress of the lead implementers. It states, as well, that the lead implementers will acknowledge and accept their designation and role as lead implementers of the Plan for Progress provide their most recent strategic plan or organizational work program to assist in coordination, work to achieve the suggested milestones, and provide modifications or additions to these milestones as deemed necessary. The following seven strategy team lead implementers signed formal MOUs for the 2004 Plan for Progress:

Strategy

Attract, Retain, and Grow Existing Businesses and Priority Clusters

Market Our Region

Enhance High-Tech and Conventional Infrastructure

Improve and Enrich Pre-K /Early Education

Revitalize the Connecticut River

Develop an Array of Housing Options

Recruit and Train a New Generation of Regional Leaders

Lead Implementer

Economic Development Partners of the Western MA EDC

Western Massachusetts Economic Development Council

EDC Infrastructure Committee

Cherish Every Child Initiative of the Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation

Connecticut River Clean-Up Committee

Valley Development Council

Leadership Pioneer Valley Steering Committee

Strategy Accomplishments

One of the most important ways that effectiveness is measured is through the accomplishment of specific goals and action steps set out for each strategy and implemented by each of the strategy teams. Details of these accomplishments over the past ten years are described in the section, “Plan for Progress Ten-Year Accomplishments 2004-2014,” earlier in this report.

Performance Indicators

Summary

In order to provide a highly objective, measurable method of accountability, the Plan for Progress has a quantitative system to complement the qualitative assessments discussed above. The system uses a series of data-based benchmarks to measure progress toward goals of each of the strategies. Called the “Plan for Progress Performance Indicators,” the system is public and online at www.stateofthepioneervalley.org. It does not attempt to evaluate current year statistics in isolation (e.g. judging whether a specific unemployment rate is “good” or “bad”), but rather looks at changes over time and the general trend, indicating whether a situation is improving or not (e.g. observing whether the unemployment rate is increasing or decreasing). The Plan for Progress Performance Indicators are a set of quantitative benchmarks that assist in identifying economic trends and measure progress towards the Pioneer Valley Plan for Progress Strategic Goals and Action Steps. For this ten-year update, the indicators are given for the earliest data available through the most recent data (generally a 7-10-year span).

Rating Scale

Each indicator was assigned a rating from 1 to 3, with a 1 assigned for a negative trend, 2 for a neutral trend, and 3 for a positive trend. Once benchmark data was collected for the most recent year available, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) staff calculated percentage changes from one year prior (or the most recent previous year possible if prior year data is not available). An improvement of at least one percent is considered a positive trend, while a decline of at least one percent is considered a negative trend. Between one percent improvement and a one percent decline is considered a neutral trend.

Regional Geography

Because the Plan for Progress was completed in conjunction with our neighbors to the north in Franklin County, ratings for each indicator represent the current trend in the given indicator for the greater Pioneer Valley which includes Hampden, Hampshire, and Franklin counties.

This evaluation section includes a chart of all performance indicators with the current and previous data as well as the percent change in data and the rating that this change warranted. Following this chart is a list of all the performance indicators organized by strategy grouping with a summary of the data and data source for each indicator.

How are we doing? Reviewing Indicator Trends

On the occasion of the 2014 Ten-Year-Update of the Plan for Progress, an analysis was conducted to explore longer term trends of the Plan for Progress Performance Indicators. While an annual update of the indicators is usually limited to examining only the last two years of data and looking at a two year trend, this year's report examines the trend for all data that has been collected for the performance indicators since their inception in 2007. In this case, each indicator was given a rating (1-3) based on the average annual change of all years of data that were collected for that item. The formula for applying the rating remained the same (more than 1% average annual change in the direction we want to see is a 3, etc.) but was simply applied to average annual change instead of simply a one-year change.

Table 15: Plan for Progress Performance Indicators – Retrospective

Indicator	2000	2001	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Avg Annual Chg	Rating
Strengthen and Expand the Region's Economic Base													2.2
The Annual Unemployment Rate			5.2%	5.4%	5.0%	5.7%	8.7%	9.1%	8.1%	7.5%		5.5%	1.0
The Total Number of Jobs (Monthly average)			283,191	284,740	284,544	284,466	275,502	277,878	279,698	282,885		0.0%	2.0
The Average Weekly Wage			\$710	\$730	\$759	\$788	\$793	\$787	\$806	\$836		2.2%	3.0
Growth of the Private Sector Payroll			\$8,266,640,018	\$8,558,054,091	\$8,876,417,218	\$9,220,469,502	\$8,889,332,883	\$9,002,311,121	\$9,230,767,177	\$9,539,762,395		1.9%	3.0
Total Number and Net Annual Change in the Number of Business Establishments			20,356	20,503	20,478	21,031	21,443	22,135	22,402	22,205		1.1%	3.0
Manufacturing as a Percent of All Employment by Number of Establishments			4.8%	4.6%	4.5%	4.4%	4.2%	4.0%	3.9%	3.7%		-2.9%	1.0
Foster Means of Regional Competitiveness													3.0
Number of Pre-Permitted Sites or Buildings Within the Region that are ready for Development				12	12	13	12	12	9	18		7.1%	3.0
Number of Shovel Ready Sites or Buildings Within the Region that are ready for Development				2	2	2	2	3	4	10		57.1%	3.0
Annual Dollar Value of Transportation Improvement Projects Advertised for Bid that Rely on Federal and/or State Financial Resources				\$39,672,448	\$38,356,132	\$41,530,689	\$141,234,444	\$118,868,201	\$122,786,770	\$94,429,067		-3.3%	1.0
% of Communities that Increased at Least One Category in Broadband Access				NA	2.9%	26.1%	0%					9.7%	3.0
0% of Households Have Broadband Access				19	18	4	4						
50% or Less of Households Have Broadband Access				4	4	22	22						
Greater than 50% Households Have Broadband Access				46	47	43	43						
Rating: 1 = negative trend, 2 = neutral trend, 3 = positive trend								* sites listed at Westmass Development Corporation only					

Summary of Plan for Progress Performance Indicators by Strategy Grouping

Following are summaries of each performance indicator currently being measured through this accountability system. Performance indicators are organized by strategy groupings and each summary includes a brief description of what is being measured, a description of what the data is showing for the most recent year(s), as well as the data source for that indicator.

Strategy Grouping I: Strengthen & Expand the Region's Economic Base

Includes the following strategies:

- Attract, Retain and Grow Existing Businesses and Priority Clusters
- Promote Small Business and Generate Flexible Risk Capital
- Market Our Region

Annual Unemployment Rate

The annual unemployment rate is calculated as the percent of all people in the labor force who are not currently employed. Between 2005 and 2008, the unemployment rate for the Pioneer Valley stayed steady just above 5%, then sharply increased to 8.7% in 2008 and peaking at 9.1% in 2010. This is largely due to the Great Recession beginning in 2008. The unemployment rate has since decreased to 7.5%. This trend remained consistent for each of the three counties of the Pioneer Valley. Hampden County's unemployment rate was 5.8% in 2005; it peaked at 10.2% in 2010, and has decreased to 8.5% in 2012. Hampshire County's unemployment rate was 4.0% in 2005; it peaked at 6.9% in 2010 and has decreased to 5.6% in 2012. Franklin County's unemployment rate was 4.3% in 2005; it peaked at 8.0% in 2010 and has decreased to 6.3% in 2012.

Data Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development's Labor Force and Unemployment Data

Total Number of Jobs

The total number of jobs includes all types of company ownership and all industries, as derived from reports filed by all employers subject to unemployment compensation laws, both state and federal. The number of jobs in the Pioneer Valley was stable and experienced an overall increase between 2005 and 2008, from 283,191 to 284,466. The number of jobs; however, decreased sharply in 2009 to 275,502 and has been on the rise since to 282,885 in 2012. The number of jobs from 2005 to 2012 has had a -0.1% change; however, it has had a 2.7% increase since 2009, the year most strongly impacted by the Great Recession. This trend remained consistent for each of the three counties of the Pioneer Valley. Hampshire County experienced a large increase of 4.4%, while Hampden County decreased by 1.0%, and Franklin County had a large decrease of 3.4 percent.

Data Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development's Employment and Wage (ES-202) data

Average Wage Earned by Workers

The average wage earned by workers includes employees in all types of company ownership and all industries, as derived from reports filed by all employers subject to unemployment compensation laws, both state and federal. The average weekly wage earned by workers in the Pioneer Valley increased significantly by 17.8 percent, raising from \$710 in 2005 to \$836 in 2012. Hampden County had the largest percent increase of 16.9%, while Hampshire County increased by 15.0% and Franklin County saw the smallest increase of 14.4%. Hampden County's wages in 2012 (\$850) were far greater than Hampshire (\$790) and Franklin (\$700) Counties. The urban areas of Hampden County and the colleges and universities within Hampshire County are likely the reason for the higher wages than the more rural Franklin County.

Data Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development's Employment and Wage (ES-202) data

Growth of the Private Sector Payroll

The private sector payroll includes the total of all wages paid from companies with private ownership for all industries, as derived from reports filed by all employers subject to unemployment compensation laws, both state and federal. The private sector payroll for the Pioneer Valley increased from \$8,266,640,018 in 2005 to \$9,539,762,395, an increase of 215.4 percent. Hampden, Hampshire, and Franklin counties all experienced positive trends, with gains of 15.3%, 19.9%, and 7.7% respectively. The Pioneer Valley as a whole, as well as each of the Counties private sector payrolls slightly decreased or stayed stagnant in 2009 at the beginning of the Great Recession.

Data Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development's Employment and Wage (ES-202) data

Total Number of Business Establishments

The total number of business establishments includes businesses with all types of company ownership and all industries, as derived from reports filed by all employers subject to unemployment compensation laws, both state and federal. In the Pioneer Valley, the total number of business establishments increased 9.1% from 20,356 in 2005 to 22,205 in 2012. This was however, a decrease of 800 businesses since 2011. This trend remained consistent for each of the three counties in the Pioneer Valley. While the largest increase in the number of establishments was in Hampshire County (by 10.3%), both Hampden and Franklin counties saw an increase in their number of businesses as well (9.3% and 5.4% respectively). Each county lost a fraction of business between 2011 and 2012, after generally increasing from 2005 to 2011.

Data Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development's Employment and Wage (ES-202) data

Manufacturing as a Percent of All Employment by Number of Establishments

This measure was calculated by dividing the total number of establishments in the manufacturing sector by the total number of establishments. These numbers include companies with all types of ownership, as derived from reports filed by all employers subject to unemployment compensation laws, both state and federal. Overall, manufacturing remained fairly stable as a percentage of all establishments in the Pioneer Valley, decreasing steadily from 4.8% in 2005 to 3.7% in 2012, a total change of 22.9 percent.

The trend was consistent throughout the region, with manufacturing remaining relatively stable throughout all three county areas. Hampden (-23.0%), Hampshire (-23.7%), and Franklin (-14.0%) Counties all saw large decreases; however, Franklin County experience a small increases from 2006 to 2008 and 2010 to 2011. As the more rural county, Franklin County appears to be more attractive for manufacturing businesses. In 2012, 4.8% of all establishments in Franklin County were manufacturing as opposed to 3.9% in Hampden County and 2.8% in Hampshire County.

Data Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development's Employment and Wage (ES-202) data

Strategy Grouping II: Foster Means of Regional Competitiveness

Includes the following strategies:

- Advocate Efficient Regulatory Processes at All Levels of Government
- Recruit and Train a New Generation of Regional Leaders
- Enhance High-Tech and Conventional Infrastructure

Number of Pre-Permitted & Shovel-Ready Sites or Buildings within the Region that are ready for Development

Pre-permitting and shovel-ready designations are made to increase the expediency of development on properties by reducing the amount of work necessary between the purchase of land and the start of construction. Sites with pre-permitting need only the final site plan review and permitting related to environmental preservation (if applicable). This process can take up to 90 days to complete. Sites are designated shovel-ready after all permits have been acquired and a complete build out analysis has been completed. The only steps still necessary are acquiring a building permit and making minor amendments to prior permits if necessary. This process takes up to 30 days.

There was a 50% increase in the number of sites that were pre-permitted despite a dip in 2011 and a simultaneous 400% increase in the number of shovel ready projects in the Pioneer Valley between 2006 and 2012. Of the three counties in the Pioneer Valley, the changes in pre-permitted sites occurred entirely in Hampden County. Additionally, only Hampden County contained pre-permitted sites with a total of 10 sites ready for development. Hampden and Franklin County saw no change in the number of pre-permitted sites or shovel ready projects between 2005 and 2012.

Data Source: WestMass Development Corporation

Annual Dollar Value of Transportation Improvement Projects Advertised for Bid that Rely on Federal and/or State Financial Resources

Transportation Improvement Projects included in this value are highway improvement projects identified through the Transportation Improvement Program report by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and Franklin Regional Council of Governments, and advertised by Mass Highway. The total value of transportation improvement projects advertised for the Pioneer Valley increased from \$39,672,448 in 2006 to \$41,530,689 in 2008, then sharply increasing to \$141,234,444 in 2009. Since 2009, the total value of transportation improvement projects decrease to \$122,786,770 in 2011 and further to \$94,429,067 in 2012, representing a -33.14% change. Trends were varied across the region. Franklin County saw a decrease of 172.6%, Hampden County a 194% decrease, while Hampshire County saw a 25.1% increase.

The values for 2012 show a slight decrease in the additional funds that originate from federal funds directed through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act money.

Data Source: Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Estimated Percentage of Municipalities with Some Access to High Speed Internet Service for Business and Residents

To measure high speed internet access, municipalities are broken down into three levels of available service which are those where 10% or less of households have broadband access, towns and cities where 11%-50% of households have broadband access, and those places where greater than 50% of households have broadband access. Progress is measured by the number of municipalities that increased their access enough to be categorized at least one level higher. Measurements for the previous years of 2007 and 2008 were based on estimates made by WesternMA Connect with the data available at that time. As of 2009, the accuracy of broadband access data has improved through survey and service modeling work conducted by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI). The MBI will continue to monitor the status of broadband access over the next five years. Level of access did not change in the Pioneer Valley between 2008 and 2009. That being said, extensive infrastructure has been built around the Pioneer Valley and all of Western Massachusetts to create increased access to broadband and we are aware that the situation is improving. Staff will continue to explore new data options as this work continues.

As it becomes available, updated data will be published at www.stateofthepioneervalley.org.

Data Source: WesternMA Connect Inc. and Massachusetts Broadband Institute

Strategy Grouping III: Supply the Region with an Educated, Skilled, and Adequately Sized Pool of Workers

Includes the following strategies:

- Integrate Workforce Development and Business Priorities
- Advance Early Education Strategy at State and Regional Levels
- Improve and Enrich K to 12 Education
- Support Higher Education and Retain Graduates

Percent of Students Scoring Proficient or Above on MCAS Third Grade English Language (Reading) Test

The percent of students scoring proficient or above on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) Third Grade English Language test includes all students scoring “Proficient” or “Above Proficient,” and was calculated by dividing the percent of students who received these scores on the test by the total number of students in the region who took the test. Between 2006 and 2012 the Pioneer Valley saw an overall increase in the percentage of students who scored proficient or above on the MCAS third grade English language test from 50.5% to 54.6% in 2012; however, the percentage decreased significantly to 48.1% in 2013. The percent change from 2006 to 2013 was a 4.7 % decrease. The three counties in the Pioneer Valley followed generally similar trends. While both Hampden and Franklin counties experienced large decreases of 2.8% and 3.9%, respectively, Hampshire County saw a smaller decrease in proficiency of approximately 1.2 percent.

Data Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education

Percent of Students Passing the MCAS Tenth Grade Math Test

The percent of students passing the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tenth grade math test was calculated by dividing the percent of students who passed the test by the total number of students in the region who took the test. Overall, between 2006 and 2013, the Pioneer Valley remained relatively stable, with a slight decrease of 0.8% (from 89.4% to 88.7%) in the number of students who passed the MCAS tenth grade math test with the largest changes occurred in 2007 (a decrease to 85.9%). Hampshire and Hampden counties both experienced minor decreases (0.5% and 0.7% respectively), while Franklin County experienced a larger decrease of 4.7% less students passing the MCAS tenth grade math test.

Data Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education

Percent of Students Passing the MCAS Tenth Grade English Test

The percent of students passing the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tenth grade English test was calculated by dividing the percent of students who passed the test by the total number of students in the region who took the test. Overall, between 2006 and 2013, the Pioneer Valley saw an increase of 4.4% (from 92.9% to 97.0%) in the number of students who passed the MCAS English test. All three counties saw increases in the percentage of students passing the test with Hampden County increasing the most, 5.6%. Hampshire and Franklin counties experienced slight increases of 1.4% and 0.7%, respectively. Hampshire County, Franklin County, and the Pioneer Valley saw decreases to their lowest percentage of students passing the test in 2007 and 2008.

Data Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education

Dropout Rate of High school Students

Educational attainment is calculated by determining the percentage of high school graduates above the age of 25 who have a high school diploma, including those who have attained more advanced degrees (Associate's, Bachelor's, Graduate, or Professional). Between 2000 and 2012, the percentage of the Pioneer Valley workforce who are high school graduates increased 6.2% from 86.7% to 87.8%. Though, the majority of the increase came between 2000 and 2008, there was still an increase of 1.1% from 2008 to 2012. Hampden, Hampshire, and Franklin Counties all experienced increases of 7.1%, 5.4%, and 6.7%, respectively.

Data Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education

Educational Attainment of the Workforce 25 or older as Measured by the Percentage of High School Graduates

Educational attainment is calculated by determining the percentage of high school graduates above the age of 25 who have a high school diploma, including those who have attained more advanced degrees (Associate's, Bachelor's, Graduate, or Professional). Between 2000 and 2012, the percentage of the Pioneer Valley workforce who are high school graduates increased 6.2% from 86.7% to 87.8%. Though, the majority of the increase came between 2000 and 2008, there was still an increase of 1.1% from 2008 to 2012. Hampden, Hampshire, and Franklin Counties all experienced increases of 7.1%, 5.4%, and 6.7%, respectively.

Data Source: United States Census Bureau 2010 and 2011 American Community Survey, 1 Year Estimates

Educational Attainment of the Workforce 25 or older as Measured by the Percentage of College Graduates

Educational attainment is calculated by determining the percentage of the population above the age of 25 who have at least an Associate's degree, including those who have attained more advanced degrees (Bachelor's, Graduate or Professional). Between 2000 and 2012, the percentage of the Pioneer Valley workforce who are college graduates increased 20.0% from 25.5% to 30.6%. Though the majority of the increase came between 2000 and 2008, there was still an increase of 7.4% from 2008 to 2012. Hampden, Hampshire, and Franklin Counties all experienced large increases 25.0%, 15.6%, and 22.8%, respectively.

Data Source: United States Census Bureau 2010 and 2011 American Community Survey, 1 Year Estimates

The Percent of Older Workers (55 to 75 years old) Who Remain Engaged in the Workforce

The percent of older workers who remain engaged in the workforce is calculated by dividing the number of people between the ages 55 to 75 years old who are in the labor force by the total number of people between the ages of 55 to 75 years old. Between 2000 and 2012, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that the percent of older workers who remain engaged in the workforce in the Pioneer Valley increased significantly (29.4% overall) from 32.0% to 41.4%. However, the percentage had risen sharply from 32.0% to 52.0% by 2005 where it stayed stable during the Great Recession until it decreased sharply to 43.8% in 2010. Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire Counties experienced significant decreases of 22.7%, 21.6%, and 10.8%, respectively between 2005 and 2012.

Data Source: United States Census Bureau 2010 and 2011 American Community Survey, 1 Year Estimates

The Median Age of the Region's Workforce Encompassing Ages 16 to 64

The median age of the regions workforce is the middle age of all people engaged in the labor force between the ages of 16-64 years old. In the Pioneer Valley, the median age of the workforce increased by 9.1% between 2000 and 2012, from 37.5 to 40.9 years old. The median age; however, has stayed fairly stable since 2009. Trends followed consistent patterns in the three counties. The median worker age increased by 9.7% in Hampshire County, 6.3% in Hampshire County, and 11.8% in Franklin County. Hampshire County's median age of the workforce (37.2 years old) was significantly lower in 2012 than Hampden (41.7 years old) and Franklin (44.7 years old) Counties.

Data Source: United States Census Bureau 2010 and 2011 American Community Survey, 1 Year Estimates

Strategy Grouping IV: Foster the Region's Business Climate and Prospects for Sustainable Growth

Includes the following strategies:

- Revitalize the Connecticut River
- Develop an Array of Housing Options
- Endorse a Regional Approach to Public Safety
- Champion Statewide Fiscal Equity

Total Number of Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Sites on the Lower Connecticut River and Tributaries

As quoted from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, "Combined sewer overflows, or CSOs, were built as part of sewer collection systems that were designed to carry both sewage and storm water in the same pipe. When there is not a lot of storm water, this mix is transported to a wastewater treatment plant where it is processed. However, after heavy rainfall or snowmelt, storm water and sewage overload the system. Without CSOs, this mix would back up into homes, businesses, and public streets. Combined sewer systems have regulator structures that allow overloaded systems to discharge into rivers, lakes and coastal areas subjecting them to higher pollutant loads. This can compromise a water body's uses and lead to water quality violations in the receiving waters." Throughout the Pioneer Valley, the total number of CSO sites on the Connecticut River has decreased* from 101 to 66 between 2001 and 2012, representing 34.7% reduction. As of 2012, Hampshire County has eliminated its remaining CSOs. Franklin County still contains three CSOs, all in Montague, while since 2001; Hampden County has decreased from 95 to 63 as of 2012.

Data Source: Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

*Due to adjustments in how CSOs are counted, figures from prior reports may not be fully consistent with updated data. However, the overall trend is quite clear – there has been a consistent reduction in Pioneer Valley CSOs and reports of these reductions are still accurate.

Amount of Non-School Local Aid Per Capita Received by the Region's Cities and Towns

The amount of non-school local aid includes all aid that a town receives for purposes other than education. This includes the following sources: Unrestricted General Government Aid, Local Share of Racing Taxes, Regional Public Libraries, Police Career Incentive, Urban Revitalization, Veteran's Benefits, Exemptions for Veterans, Blind and Surviving Spouses, Exemptions for the Elderly, State Owned Land, and Public Libraries. In the Pioneer Valley, the per-capita non-local school aid decreased 17.9% between 2006 and 2013. Hampshire County saw the largest decrease (19.8%), followed by Hampden County (18.7%) while Franklin experienced the smallest decrease of 8.0 percent.

Data Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Cherry Sheets

Rate of Property and Violent Crimes Reported

Property and violent crimes consist of the following crimes: Murder and Non-negligent Manslaughter, Forcible Rape, Robbery, Aggravated Assault, Burglary, Larceny-Theft, Motor Vehicle Theft and Arson. The rate of property and violent crimes reported in the Pioneer Valley decreased 4.6% between 2005 and 2011 from 3.7 to 3.5 crimes per 100 people. The Pioneer Valley's decrease was largely due to the decrease in rate of property and violent crimes reported in Hampden County, which saw a 10.4% decrease from 4.5 crimes per 100 people in 2005 to 4.0 in 2011. Hampshire and Franklin Counties experienced increases in the rate of property and violent crimes reported of 5.6% and 9.1%, respectively. These counties; however, have overall much lower crimes per 100 people than Hampden County at nearly half the rate with 1.9 crimes per 100 people in Hampshire County and 2.4 in Franklin County.

Data Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation
Note: The FBI does not have data on some smaller towns

Percentage of Housing Units that are Owner-Occupied

Percentage of Housing Units that are Owner-Occupied includes all types of housing units and is calculated by dividing the number of owner-occupied housing units by the total number of housing units in the region. Between 2000 and 2012, the percentage of housing units in the Pioneer Valley that are owner-occupied increased by 3.9% (from 61.7 percent to 64.1 percent). These percentages rose between 2000 and 2008 to 66.0% and have mostly stabilized since 2009. Overall, trends were relatively stable across the region, with increases in ownership in Hampshire and Franklin counties, of 4.3 and 25.3 percent, while Hampden County saw a marginal increase of 0.8 percent. The percentage of housing units in the Pioneer Valley that are owner-occupied in Franklin and Hampshire Counties (68.0 and 67.7 percent, respectively) is significantly higher than in Hampden County (62.3 percent).

Data Source: United States Census Bureau 2010 and 2011 American Community Survey 1 year estimates

Percentage of Owners with Mortgages Paying more than 30% of Their Income on Selected Monthly Owner Costs

According to many government agencies, people who pay more than 30% of their income on housing costs are considered to be housing cost burdened. The U.S. Census Bureau provides estimates on this statistic based on a survey of a sample of the population with the American Community Survey. Data for this indicator includes all home owners who have mortgages. Monthly owner costs include payment for mortgages, real estate taxes, various insurances, utilities, fuels, mobile home costs, and condominium fees. Between 2005 and 2012, the percentage of home owners in the Pioneer Valley who were housing cost burdened increased from 30.3% to 31.4% (representing a 3.7% increase). Since 2008; however, the percentage of home owners in the Pioneer Valley who were housing cost burdened decreased by 17.4 percent from 38.1 percent.

Similar trends were seen throughout each of the counties. Hampden and Franklin Counties increased 4.3 and 21.2 percent, respectively, while Hampshire County saw a 5.7 percent decrease.

Data Source: United States Census Bureau 2010 and 2011 American Community Survey, 1 Year Estimates

Percentage of Renters Paying More than 30% of Their Income on Rent

According to many government agencies, people who pay more than 30% of their income on housing costs are considered to be housing cost burdened. The U.S. Census Bureau provides estimates on this statistic based on a survey of a sample of the population with the American Community Survey. Between 2005 and 2012, the percentage of renters in the Pioneer Valley who were housing cost burdened increased from 50.6 to 53.6 percent (representing a 5.9% change). This percentage has risen to as high as 54.6 percent in 2010 with yearly fluctuations. Franklin and Hampshire Counties experienced decreases of 13.9 and 11.5 percent, while Hampden County saw an increase of 14.9 percent. Each county; however, experienced similar yearly increase and decrease fluctuations.

Data Source: United States Census Bureau 2010 and 2011 American Community Survey, 1 Year Estimates

Median Sale Price of a Single Family Home

Single family home sales include all transfers over \$1,000 classified by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue with a 101 use code. Between 2006 and 2013, the median sale price of a single family home in the Pioneer Valley decreased from \$202,889 to \$190,750, a 6.0% decrease. The Pioneer Valley saw 7.7% increase though, from \$177,095 in 2012. This was the first increase seen since 2007. Each of the counties saw similar trends with overall decreases from 2006 to 2013 and an increase from 2012 to 2013. Hampshire County had the lowest decrease of 3.9%, while Hampden and Franklin Counties experienced a larger decline of 8.8% and 8.5%, respectively. The majority of the decreases occurred between 2007 and 2010. The Pioneer Valley and the counties mostly stabilized between 2010 and 2012 and increased in 2013. This stabilizing trend in home sale prices suggests that, at least in some areas, the housing market crash of the past couple of years is continuing to turn around in the region.

Data Source: The Warren Group and Realtor Association of the Pioneer Valley

Building Permits Issued for New Residential Construction

Between 2005 and 2012, the number of building permits issued for new residential construction in the Pioneer Valley saw a significant decrease of 39.2 percent, from 922 permits in 2005 to 561 in 2012. The Pioneer Valley issued the most permits in 2006 with 1,024; nearly double the number as in 2012. The general trend during the period was an overall decline between 2005 and 2008, rising in 2009 and 2010, declining again in 2011 and a increasing slightly in 2012. This decrease was seen across all three counties with Hampden and Franklin Counties seeing the largest decreases of 43.1 and 46.9 percent, respectively. Hampshire County's building permits issued fell slightly less at 26.6 percent. Hampden County issues over twice as many building permits per year than the other two counties with 330 issued in 2012 compared to 179 issued in Hampshire County and 52 in Franklin County.

Data Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Urban Core Data

The 2004 Plan for Progress highlighted seven cross-cutting themes of regional significance that should be a focus of all of the Plan's strategies and measures of success. Urban investment is a primary one of these cross-cutting themes. It is absolutely clear that a truly vibrant and healthy Pioneer Valley requires vibrant and healthy urban core cities. The term "urban core" in the context of this cross-cutting theme refers primarily to Springfield and Holyoke, and, to some extent, the adjacent city of Chicopee. The Plan for Progress endorses strategies and actions that directly or indirectly invest in the development and improvement of the region's urban core cities and generate benefits for their residents as well as the region as a whole.

To help measure the progress that the region is making in developing a more healthy and strong urban core, indicator data and trends are also gathered specifically for the urban core cities of Springfield, Holyoke, and the sections of Chicopee that have higher concentrations of poverty (census tracts 8111.01, 8111.02, and 8109.02). Following is a summary table of the Plan for Progress indicator trends specifically for the urban core communities.

Table 16: Plan for Progress Performance Indicators – Retrospective - Urban Core

Indicator	2000	2001	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Avg Annual Chg	Rating	Includes Chicopee?
Strengthen and Expand the Region's Economic Base													2.2	
The Annual Unemployment Rate			7.3%	7.4%	6.9%	7.9%	11.7%	12.3%	11.6%			8.4%	1	No
The Total Number of Jobs (Monthly average)			98,210	95,554	95,211	97,491	95,229	98,194	96,125			-0.3%	2	No
The Average Weekly Wage			\$778	\$806	\$840	\$877	\$882	\$883	\$902			2.3%	3	No
Growth of the Private Sector Payroll			\$3,263,625,669	\$3,362,084,976	\$3,520,768,059	\$3,680,801,158	\$3,597,685,318	\$3,637,571,575	\$3,711,224,070			2.0%	3	No
Total Number and Net Annual Change in the Number of Business Establishments			7,025	6,881	7,008	7,240	7,397	7,690	7,780			1.5%	3	No
Manufacturing as a Percent of All Employment by Number of Establishments			3.2%	3.1%	2.9%	2.7%	2.6%	2.4%	2.3%			-4.2%	1	No
Foster Means of Regional Competitiveness													2.0	
Number of Pre-Permitted Sites or Buildings Within the Region that are ready for Development*					0	1	0	6	6	0		0.0%	2.0	No
Number of Shovel Ready Sites or Buildings Within the Region that are ready for Development*					1	1	1	1	1	0		-16.7%	1.0	No
Annual Dollar Value of Transportation Improvement Projects Advertised for Bid that Rely on Federal and/or State Financial Resources				\$9,922,300	\$11,663,732	\$26,509,011	\$22,844,570	\$28,271,854	\$27,763,257	\$13,452,503		5.1%	3.0	Yes
% increased a category												0.0%	2.0	Yes
10% or Less of Households Have Broadband Access				0	0	0	0							Yes
50% or Less of Households Have Broadband Access				0	0	0	0							Yes
Greater than 50% Households Have Broadband Access				3	3	3	3							Yes

Table 16: Plan for Progress Performance Indicators – Retrospective - Urban Core(Continued)													
Supply the Region with an Educated, Skilled and Adequately Sized Pool of Workers													1.9
Percent of Students Scoring Proficient or Above on MCAS Reading Test (3rd grade)				34.6%	37.0%	30.0%	33.7%	37.5%	37.0%	37.9%		1.37%	3 Yes
Percent of Students Passing MCAS Math Test (10th grade)				63.8%	69.6%	72.4%	72.7%	72.3%	74.8%	74.8%		2.46%	3 No
Percent of Students Passing MCAS English Test (10th grade)				78.8%	80.4%	86.5%	85.9%	86.8%	89.8%	91.5%		2.30%	3 No
The Dropout Rate of High School Students (Grades 9 through 12)			11.8%	9.1%	11.0%	10.0%	9.1%	10.3%	11.3%			-0.60%	2 No
Educational Attainment of the Workforce 25 or older as Measured by the Percentage of High School Graduates	72.3%					76.6%	75.5%	75.4%	75.4%			0.36%	2 Yes
Educational Attainment of the Workforce 25 or older as Measured by the Percentage of College Graduates	22.3%					17.6%	17.6%	24.5%	17.3%			-1.86%	1 Yes
The Percent of Older Workers (55 to 75 years old) Who Remain Engaged in the Workforce	26.6%					44.1%	50.4%	46.4%	34.8%			2.56%	3 No
The Median Age of The Region's Workforce Encompassing Ages 16 to 64	37					36.7	37.6	37.7	38.1			0.25%	2 Yes
Economic Enhancements Fostering The Region's Business Climate and Prospects for Sustainable Economic Growth													1.9
The Total Number of Combined Sewer Over Flow (CSO) Sites on the Lower Connecticut River and Tributaries		73	68				67		67	63		-1.14%	3 Yes
The Amount of Non-School Local Aid Per Capita Received by the Region's Cities and Towns				\$ 264.00	\$ 330.80	\$ 335.54	\$ 334.00	\$ 334.00	\$ 216.00	\$ 209.00		-2.98%	1 No
The Rate of Property and Violent Crimes Reported per 100 Persons			7.2	6.9	6.7	6.3	5.8	6	6.097068269			-2.19%	3 No
The Percentage of Housing Units that are Owner-Occupied	35.5%					49.4%	49.9%	43.8%	48.1%			2.97%	3 Yes
Percentage of Owners with Mortgages Paying more than 30% of their Income on Selected Monthly Owner Costs	17.9%					37.2%	37.7%	43.8%	42.2%			11.34%	1 Yes
Percent of Renters paying more than 30% of their income on rent	41.7%					55.8%	56.3%	59.0%	59.0%			3.45%	1 Yes
The Median Sale Price of a Single Family Home				\$ 154,396	\$ 154,686	\$ 136,766	\$ 131,528	\$ 125,119	\$ 114,263	\$ 114,480		-3.69%	1 No
Building Permits Issued for New Residential Construction			248	252	154	89	130	72	70			-10.25%	1 No

APPENDIX A: PROJECT PROPOSALS BY INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITIES

**APPENDIX B:
PLAN FOR PROGRESS
COORDINATING COUNCIL, TRUSTEES, AND STRATEGY
TEAM MEMBERSHIPS**



**Plan for Progress
Coordinating Council Membership
June 2014**

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Suzanne Beck, *Executive Director, Greater Northampton Chamber of Commerce*
Ellen Bemben, *President, T2 Foundation*
Allan Blair, *President/CEO, Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts*
Timothy Brennan, *Executive Director, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission*
Patricia Crosby, *Executive Director, Franklin/Hampshire Regional Employment Board*
Dianne Fuller Doherty, *Regional Director, Massachusetts Small Business Development Center*
Kathleen Dowd, *Director, Human Service Forum, Inc.*
Linda Dunlavy, *Executive Director, Franklin Regional Council of Governments*
Martha Field, Ph.D., *Dean of Institutional Support & Advancement, Greenfield Community College*
Brooks Fitch, *Director, W.E.B. DuBois Center at University of Massachusetts/Amherst*
Michael Fritz, *Consultant*
John Gallup
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Daniel Hodge, *Director of Economic and Public Policy Research, UMass Donahue Institute*
Samalid Hogan, *Senior Project Manager and Brownfields Coordinator, Office of Planning & Economic Development, City of Springfield*
David Howland, *Regional Engineer, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection*
Geoff Little, *Senior Account Representative, Training and Workforce Options (TWO)*
Larry Martin, *Business Services and Projects Manager, Regional Employment Board of Hampden County*
Terence Masterson, *Economic Development Director, City of Northampton*
William Messner, Ph.D., *President, Holyoke Community College*
Marla Michel, *Executive Director, Economic Development Strategies & Regional Partnerships, UMass/Amherst and Director, Scibelli Enterprise Center*
Russell Peotter, *General Manager, WGBY - 57*
Katherine Putnam, *President, Package Machinery Company, Inc.*
Robert Reckman, *Northampton Chamber of Commerce and Fairgrounds Redevelopment Corporation*
James Shriver, *Chairman, Chamber Energy Coalition, Inc.*
Christopher Sikes, *Chief Executive Officer, Common Capital*
Michael Suzor, *Assistant to the President, Springfield Technical Community College*
Oreste Varela, *Springfield Branch Manager, U.S. Small Business Administration*
Michael Vedovelli, *Senior Regional Director, Massachusetts Office of Business Development*

Mary Walachy, *Executive Director, Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation*

Lora Wondolowski, *Executive Director, Leadership Pioneer Valley*

David Woods, *Principal, Woods Financial Group*

Katie Zobel, *President, Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts*

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David Howland, *Regional Engineer, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection*

Geoff Little, *Senior Account Representative, Training and Workforce Options (TWO)*

Larry Martin, *Business Services and Projects Manager, Regional Employment Board of Hampden County*

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Russell Peotter, *General Manager, WGBY - 57*

Katherine Putnam, *President, Package Machinery Co. Inc.*

Carl Rathmann, Ph.D., *Dean of Engineering, Western New England College*

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James Shriver, *Chairman, Chamber Energy Coalition, Inc.*

Christopher Sikes, *Chief Executive Officer, Common Capital*

Michael Suzor, *Assistant to the President, Springfield Technical Community College*

Patricia Sweitzer, *Administrator, Massachusetts Partners for Public Education*

The Honorable Michael Tautznik, *Mayor, City of Easthampton*

Oreste Varela, *Springfield Branch Manager, U.S. Small Business Administration*

Michael Vedovelli, *Senior Regional Director, Massachusetts Office of Business Development*

Mary Walachy, *Executive Director, Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation*

Lora Wondolowski, *Executive Director, Leadership Pioneer Valley*

David Woods, *Principal, Woods Financial Group*

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