

2017 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Annual Update
June 2017



Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
and Economic Development District

The Pioneer Valley Plan for Progress

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

2017 CEDS Annual Update

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INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

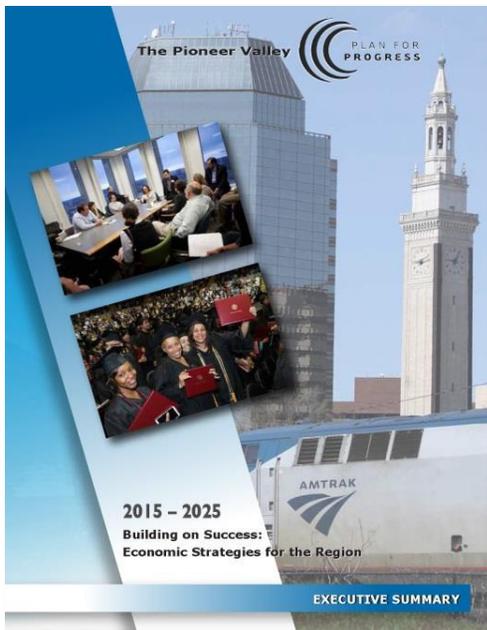
The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a companion document to the region's Plan for Progress, described below, and provides a means for regional collaboration to define and advance key economic interests of the region and its people. The Pioneer Valley region was designated an Economic Development District in 1999 by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, and in keeping with this designation, the region prepares a CEDS that is updated annually.

The CEDS features a description of regional economic conditions and sets forth goals and objectives for the future, as well as a list of projects seeking EDA Public Works funding in the next year. More detailed information and data about the region's demographics, regional assets, employment, and education system is available in an online Appendix, along with this document, at <http://www.pvpc.org/plans/comprehensive-economic-development-strategy-ceds>.



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

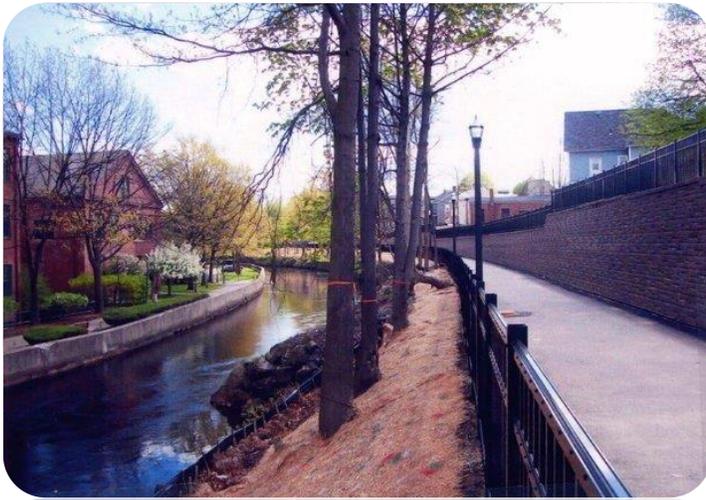


The Pioneer Valley Plan for Progress is a 10-year blueprint for economic development in the region, crafted by the combined efforts of the region's public, private, and civic sectors. It contains a compilation of economic strategies, supported and advanced by a growing network of leaders from across the region, developed through research and business community participation. These strategies are then incorporated into the CEDS and progress is updated annually. The 2015 Plan for Progress is the most current version, with previous editions of the Plan developed in 1994 and 2004.

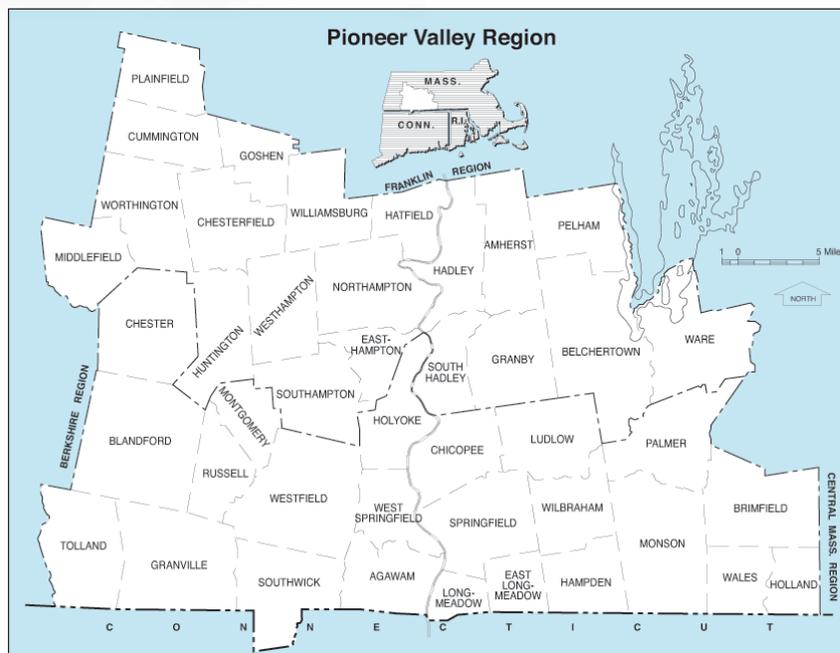
Overview of the Pioneer Valley Region

Located in the midwestern section of Massachusetts and covering 1,179 square miles, the Pioneer Valley region and designated Economic Development District encompasses the fourth largest metropolitan area in New England. The region's 43 cities and towns are home to about 631,980 people and include the cities of Springfield, Holyoke, Chicopee, Westfield and Northampton. Springfield, the third largest city in Massachusetts, is the region's cultural and economic center. The city is home to several of the region's largest employers, including Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company and Baystate Health, and is a hub for a growing number of small business and entrepreneurial ventures.

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 Connecticut River and its broad, fertile agricultural valley; the Holyoke Mountain range that traverses the region from Southwick to Pelham; and the foothills of the Berkshire Mountains to the west. Choices in life-style range from contemporary downtown living to suburban neighborhoods, vibrant small towns, and scenic rural communities—a variety that contributes to the 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.



Chicopee Canal Park and Bike Path



Regional Economic Trends 2016-2017

The Pioneer Valley continues to rebound from the Great Recession that officially extended from 2007 to 2009 but had impacts both regionally and nationally until quite recently. New development and investments have increased significantly throughout the Valley, particularly in the last couple of years, ranging from the redevelopment of historic buildings and venues such as Union Station, the “Cubit” in Holyoke, Pleasant Street Mills in Easthampton, and the Ludlow Mills, to new construction and employment centers including the CRRC MA subway car plant in Springfield, U.S. Tsubaki expansion in Chicopee, and the Mill District in Amherst. Regional metrics addressing economic growth and quality of life (see Regional Economic Performance Indicators on page 25) show a more mixed picture but are generally positive.

The number of total employers in the region has grown, and both new and existing employers have been able to hire more Pioneer Valley residents, bringing the unemployment rate back to 4.4%, the lowest since 2001. New construction jobs for the projects mentioned above have played a role in this change, as well as growth in the number of entrepreneurs, who are experiencing an increasing level of support in the region. The Valley Venture Mentors program has expanded programmatically and geographically, serving greater numbers of business start-ups as well as assisting small manufacturers to streamline and expand their operations. New co-working spaces have sprouted or expanded in nearly every large community, including CoWork Springfield, Gateway City Arts in Holyoke, Easthampton Co.Lab, Click Workspace in Northampton, and Amherst Works. Leadership development programs in the region are becoming quite popular and are growing. Two relatively newer programs, Leadership Pioneer Valley and LIPPI (Leadership Institute for Political and Public Impact), have each graduated over 200 emerging leaders in the past six to seven years.



Numerous efforts are under way to develop the talent inherent in our region’s population, and the high school graduation rate has been increasing overall, with positive trends in the urban core cities of Springfield and Holyoke. Similarly, early education trends in the urban core show improvement due to the collaboration of local partners that helped to obtain a federal pre-school enhancement grant. Workforce training efforts are bearing fruit, with an especially significant increase in Hampden County (41%) between FY15 and FY16 due to the enhanced efforts of the Regional Employment Board and its partners. The Westfield Technical Academy’s aviation program was awarded FAA certification and is one of only three high schools in the country to achieve this stature. The MGM Resorts HCC Center for Culinary Arts at Holyoke is under construction and will train dozens of students each year for the hospitality field, including 50 Holyoke students free of charge. The remainder of the building, which is known as the “Cubit,” will comprise apartment lofts, artist studios, and office space and will be part of the revitalization of Holyoke’s Innovation District.



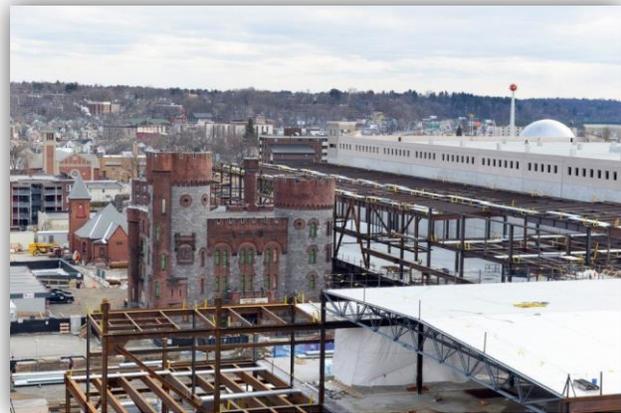
Construction workers watch Union Station media event



Infrastructure improvements are moving forward slowly but steadily, with none more long-awaited than Springfield's restored and renovated Union Station opening as an intermodal transportation center in the spring of 2017. This achievement follows several decades of unflinching collaborative efforts. Passenger rail service through this station is now regularly available on the north-south route along the Connecticut River, and MassDOT collaborated with Connecticut and Vermont on a study examining the potential for an improved "Inland Route" from Springfield to Boston, with faster travel times and more trains daily. Implementation of the study recommendations will be another long-term project, however. Road and transit conditions are being addressed, as well; although many roads throughout the

region are in need of improvement, the major I-91 Viaduct deck replacement project is now more than half completed. A new PVTA Transit Pavilion opened in Westfield, and Union Station will provide upgraded and improved PVTA facilities in Springfield.

Broadband access is improving, particularly with the recent growth of local districts such as Whip City Fiber in Westfield and Holyoke's HG&E Telecom which serves businesses in Holyoke, Chicopee, parts of Springfield, and in surrounding areas, as well as remotely managing a fiber-to-the-home network in Leverett. Rural communities in the Pioneer Valley will soon benefit from expedited state funding for "Last Mile" service, including eight towns served by a contract between MBI and Comcast and two to be served by Charter Communications.



MGM Springfield construction site in March 2017

Other signs are less encouraging and show a need for ongoing efforts to bolster the talent pipeline and regional infrastructure. Poverty has remained stable, but is still much too high, with one of every three people in the region living with an income below 200% of the poverty line, which is equivalent to about \$31,860 for a two-person household. Early education and community college graduation indicators have fluctuated over the past couple of years, prior to the federal pre-school grant, and in Franklin County early education enrollment rates appear to be dropping. Income inequality shows no sign of improvement. Much work remains to be done, and the power of collaborative efforts to achieve results will need to be tapped. However, the Pioneer Valley appears to be on a positive track economically, with a hopeful future.

The following table gives additional details on some of the largest projects under way in the region.

Please note: A special Appendix to the CEDS includes comprehensive information and data about the region's demographics, geography, regional assets, employment, and education system and will be available in June, along with this document, online at <http://www.pvpc.org/plans/comprehensive-economic-development-strategy-ceds>.

Major Committed Projects of Regional Significance

The following projects are planned or under way in our region in 2017:

Project	Key Implementer(s)	Public or Private?	Total Estimated Cost
Agri-Mark Expansion	Agri-Mark, Town of West Springfield	Private	\$12 M
Business Innovation Hub	University of Massachusetts/Amherst	Public	\$62 M
Physical Sciences Building	University of Massachusetts/Amherst	Public	\$102 M
Blanchard Campus Center Expansion	Mount Holyoke College	Private	\$50 M
PVTA Maintenance Facility	Pioneer Valley Transit Authority	Public	\$55 M
MGM Resorts HCC Center for Culinary Arts at Holyoke	MGM, Holyoke Community College	Public/ Private	\$3.3 M
MGM Springfield	MGM Resorts International	Private	\$950 M
Springfield Innovation Center	DevelopSpringfield, MassDevelopment	Public/ Private	\$4 M
U.S. Tsubaki Expansion	U.S. Tsubaki, City of Chicopee	Private	\$11.5 M
Ludlow Mills Senior Housing	WinnDevelopment	Private	\$24.5 M
CRRC Rail Car Manufacturing Plant	CRRC USA Rail Corporation	Private	\$95 M
Lyman Mills Redevelopment	Mount Holyoke Development	Private	\$7 M
Aviation Research and Training Center	UMass Amherst, Westover Air Reserve Base	Public	\$10 M
Interstate 91 Viaduct Rehabilitation Project	Federal Highway Administration, MassDOT	Public	\$148 M
TOTAL COMMITTED FUNDS			\$1.5 B

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES 2016-2017

The Plan for Progress: Vision and Goals



Historic campanile clock tower reflected in Monarch Place, downtown Springfield

The 2017 CEDS update is based on progress towards goals as outlined in the 2015 Plan for Progress, which presents a ten-year 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 is expressed through *four major goal areas*, each with its own set of strategies and tangible action steps to guide the Plan's implementation. In addition, six "Decade Declarations" lay out the top priorities for the region. All of the strategies will be periodically revised in order to meet the region's changing economic needs, conditions, and circumstances.

The goals, strategies, and detailed action steps in the Plan for Progress are described in the following sections. The 2015 Plan for Progress and annual CEDS updates are available from the PVPC or online at www.pvpc.org/plans/plan-for-progress.



Springfield Central Cultural District Art Stop Program

New Decade Declarations

Based on region-wide feedback, the following are the most significant and pressing needs and opportunities that the 2015 Plan for Progress will address over the next decade:

The Region's Key Opportunities

Over the next decade encompassing 2015-2025, the Pioneer Valley will steadfastly pursue its most promising economic opportunities in the following ways:



1) Leverage New Connections That Significantly Enhance the Region's Economic Competitiveness

Work in concert with government leaders and agencies at all levels, along with the region's business and civic sectors, to complete the reconstruction, reactivation and service expansions along the Pioneer Valley's principal north-south (Knowledge Corridor) and east-west (Inland Route) rail corridors to accommodate both passenger and freight traffic. Simultaneously tackle the remaining "last mile" phase required to build out western Massachusetts' new, "middle mile" high-speed broadband network,

thereby allowing the Pioneer Valley to realize the full range of potential economic and job creation benefits while ensuring a favorable return on this substantial investment of public funds.

2) Lead the Commonwealth's Clean Energy Transformation While Moving the Region Toward a Balanced and Diversified Energy Portfolio

Maintain the Pioneer Valley's efforts to lead multifaceted efforts by the Commonwealth to significantly reduce our heavy reliance on fossil fuels and accelerate the region's transition to emerging clean energy sources, broadly employing energy conservation measures and technologies, and overall fostering the creation of a far more balanced, diversified, reliable and affordable energy supply portfolio to support the Pioneer Valley and its regional economy. More specifically, by 2025 strive to achieve parallel goals of: a) realizing over 600 million kWh of new clean energy generation coupled with a cut of 3.2 metric tons of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions emanating from Pioneer Valley sources, and b) growing our clean energy industry, which has approximately 500 establishments and 7,000 workers, as a region-specific initiative that is consistent with the most recent Massachusetts Clean Energy and Climate Plan.

3) Harness the Economic Development Potential of the New England Knowledge Corridor

Realize and tap the impressive and wide range of economic attributes and assets concentrated in the interstate New England Knowledge Corridor (NEKC) encompassing the Greater Springfield, Hartford and New Haven metropolitan areas, an economic region which boasts a population of nearly 3 million; a workforce of more than 1.25 million; 215,000 college students enrolled in 41 colleges and universities; and in excess of 64,000 businesses; thereby making the NEKC the 20th largest market in our nation. Correspondingly, utilize the NEKC with its combination of academic power, strategic location, high productivity workforce and innovative talent pool to elevate the NEKC's visibility, reputation and combined strength to participate and successfully compete in a global marketplace where critical mass, thought leadership, workforce talent and the ability to collaborate are now essential to achieving sustained economic progress.

The Region's Key Economic Challenges

Over the decade encompassing 2015-2025, the Pioneer Valley will act to address its most pressing economic challenges by addressing:

1) Talent Pool and Pipeline Challenges

Pursue a broad array of policy reforms and aggressive program initiatives and interventions that work together to identify and implement actions that both retain and expand the Pioneer Valley's supply of educated, skilled workers by a target of +6% or the equivalent of 25,000 workers, while also striving to mitigate adverse impacts to the region's higher education, manufacturing, health care and technology clusters. Critical to this effort is the improvement of educational outcomes and graduation rates in the region's public school systems, particularly in the urban core's distressed cities.



2) Fragile Infrastructure Systems

Invest and leverage limited federal, state and local financial resources, as well as public-private partnerships where possible, in order to address and resolve an ever-expanding list of the region's critical infrastructure system needs and deficiencies (e.g. roadway, transit, bridge, rail, water and sewer, etc.). Simultaneously advocate for increased and multi-year infrastructure funding commitments by the federal and state governments that are at levels of investment commensurate with maintaining all forms of the Pioneer Valley public infrastructure in a state of good repair.



3) Retention and Growth of Existing Businesses

Proactively respond to the critical importance of small and mid-sized enterprises to the Pioneer Valley economy's strength, vitality and potential for long-term jobs growth by enhancing the system of business support services provided to them and developing new and more flexible sources of growth capital. Provide these services in a way that is highly visible, accessible, coordinated and aligned with the needs of those small and mid-sized firms that demonstrate the potential to innovate, create and grow. As part of this effort, enhance supply chain and vendor opportunities for existing Pioneer Valley businesses, with special attention to connections with new major employers in the region.

Plan for Progress Goals and Strategies

To achieve the Plan's vision and address its top challenges and opportunities, the Plan for Progress sets forth the following four major goals, each of which includes a set of detailed strategies, with short- and long-term action steps. Plan for Progress implementers will:

- 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 safety and resiliency of the region.**
- 4) **Conduct economic development activities in a regionally responsible manner, prioritizing collaboration and engagement.**

The following sections outline the goals and strategies and indicate highlights of recent progress.

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

The Plan for Progress includes a primary focus on the most important factor confronting the Pioneer Valley economy, namely the talent, or 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, interstate region, the New England Knowledge Corridor. Thus, a significant emphasis will be placed on these



Square One Family Center

efforts and on collaboration among the lead implementers. To this end, Knowledge Corridor leadership worked with the Donahue institute at the University of Massachusetts to develop detailed strategies and action steps for the interstate region, and the 2015 Pioneer Valley Plan for Progress aligns well with the framework that was developed for that bi-state effort. For more information on the Donahue Institute report, please see the *Knowledge Corridor Talent and Workforce Strategy* report at <http://www.pvpc.org/content/knowledge-corridor-talent-and-workforce-strategy>.

Plan for Progress implementers affirm the importance of a core talent development pipeline that provides an unbroken continuum of preparation for young people in our communities. This “core” pipeline includes pre-K programs, the existing public school system, vocational training, community colleges and four-year colleges. Additional workforce training initiatives that address changing workforce needs are part of the core as well. However, ultimately, a healthy, vibrant and successful core pipeline will mitigate the need for remedial measures at every level. At every stage now in the educational and talent pipeline, including students beginning community college



Girls, Inc. Eureka! workshop on computer coding and cybersecurity at the Massachusetts Green High-Performance Computing Center in Holyoke

and workers entering their first jobs, full readiness often requires additional instruction, tutoring or training. While remedial actions will be needed for the foreseeable future to meet current workforce needs, we anticipate a gradual reduction in this need as the core programs are strengthened and more and more resources are directed to them.

The strategies below are grouped into traditional educational time periods and systems, while always recognizing the linkages between these elements so that there is a continuum of preparation. There is a need to align each stage of education and training with the previous stage as well as with the programs, schools and workplaces that follow it. In order to accomplish this, it is critical for education and business interests to recognize their common mission. There is also a pressing need for greater engagement by parents, guidance counselors, and others whose responsibility it is to provide support and direction to the region’s students. These individuals have a tremendous influence on young people’s perceived choices and long-term prospects.



Leadership Pioneer Valley Event

Our ultimate goals in strengthening this core talent development pipeline are to improve the high school graduation rate, improve workforce readiness, and thus greatly reduce the need for remedial and supplemental tutoring and training at every level. In addition, we endeavor to increase the engagement of talented young workers in their communities and the region. These broad goals will be achieved through the following strategies (See the Donahue Institute report for additional details¹). Also please see the 2015 Plan for Progress at <http://www.pvpc.org/plans/plan-for-progress> for further details of the ten-year action steps.

¹ The *Knowledge Corridor Talent and Workforce Strategy* report is available at <http://www.pvpc.org/content/knowledge-corridor-talent-and-workforce-strategy>

Strategy #1: Strengthen Regional Engagement and Coordination in Talent Development Initiatives

Strategy #2: Make the Implementation of High Quality Early Education an Essential Element of the Region's Economic Development

Strategy #3: Improve K-12 High School and Vocational School Achievement and Graduation Rates

Strategy #4: Improve Community and Four-Year College Programs and Graduation Rates

Strategy #5: Enhance Career and Workforce Training

Implementation Team for Goal #1:

Regional Employment Boards*

Community Colleges (STCC, HCC and GCC)*

Major Regional Employers

Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation

Institutions of Higher Education

Leadership Pioneer Valley

**Lead implementer*

Selected progress on this goal area during the past year includes:



Tech Foundry 3rd Anniversary Celebration

- CareerPoint in Holyoke, a program of the Regional Employment Board (REB) of Hampden County, ran an intensive hiring program for U.S. Tsubaki in Chicopee, which is expanding. CareerPoint hired more than 80 people for U.S. Tsubaki after screening more than 400 applicants.
- Tech Foundry celebrated its 3rd anniversary and an overall trainee placement rate of 65%, or over 50 graduates thus far, in IT jobs.
- Girls, Inc. of Holyoke sent 36 girls to Holyoke Codes workshops, increasing the participation of girls in computer science and technology fields. Holyoke Codes works closely with the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center (MGHPCC), using their meeting rooms and laptops, tablets, and robotics kits.
- The Regional Employment Boards (REBs) of Franklin-Hampshire and Hampden County have initiated a [regional planning process](#) in conjunction with the Governor's Workforce Skills Cabinet. The REBs are convening a wide range of partners and will result in a strategic workforce development plan.
- The REB of Hampden County has expanded their initiatives to include a Financial and Business Services Workforce Collaborative and has also taken a lead role in a western

- Mass IT partnership – both programs involve collaboration among community colleges, businesses, and workforce agencies.
- Another 244 children in Springfield and Holyoke attended free pre-school through partnerships between the Springfield Public Schools, the YMCA of Greater Springfield, Springfield Head Start, Square One, the Holyoke Public Schools, and Valley Opportunity Council. The program, funded by a federal grant, has also provided fair wages and extensive professional development to teachers and has increased parent engagement in both cities.
 - MGM Springfield is partnering with Holyoke Community College on the MGM Resorts HCC Center for Culinary Arts at Holyoke. Once completed, the \$3.3 million center will provide free training to 50 Holyoke students each year as part of the agreement.

Specific objectives for 2017-18 include:

- Recruit more employers to participate in training and internship programs such as Tech Foundry and Girls Inc.'s Eureka! program.
- Work together with lead implementers to identify additional workforce development initiatives, particularly those in line with the new regional workforce training plan.

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 some industries have been expanding, developing new products and services, and hiring more employees. An enhanced entrepreneurial ecosystem is coalescing, with new and expanded business mentorship programs, co-working spaces, innovation centers, and incubators. 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. The Plan also strongly encourages impact investments into companies, organizations and funds with the intention to generate measurable social, environmental and employment impact as well as strong financial return.



CRRC Rail Car Plant Under Construction, Springfield

These results 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. Finally, we must leverage the strength of the business ecosystem in other parts of the state, particularly the Greater Boston area, by making lasting connections for providers and businesses; these established networks are crucial to the growth of this region.

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

Implementation Team for

Goal #2:

EDC of Western MA*

New England Knowledge
Corridor Partnership

Economic Development
Partners

Chambers of Commerce

Regional Tourism Councils

MA Office of Business
Development

MA Small Business
Development Center

Common Capital

Valley Venture Mentors

**Potential lead implementer*



VVM Manufacturing Accelerator Graduation

Selected progress on this goal area includes:

- A coalition of small business providers, led by the Massachusetts Small Business Development Center, Common Capital, and the Family Business Center of the Pioneer Valley began a collaborative effort to coordinate services and facilitate cross-referrals.
- Valley Venture Mentors (VVM) graduated their 100th start-up from the Startup Accelerator program and kicked off the 2017 Accelerator with 36 startups chosen from more than 200 applicants. They represent more than eight industries, including technology, beauty, health care, transportation and publishing.
- Seven existing manufacturing companies graduated from VVM's new Manufacturing Accelerator program with new skills and strategies to grow their businesses in the region.
- UMass Amherst created the Maroon Venture Partners Fund, a new effort to support entrepreneurship among alumni, faculty and students.
- The Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts and the Greater Springfield Convention and Visitors' Bureau completed a new branding campaign for the region that will be used in economic development and tourism outreach efforts.
- The New England Knowledge Corridor Partnership completely overhauled and updated its website: <http://knowledgecorridor.org/>

Specific objectives for 2017-18 include:

- Continue coalition of small business providers to enhance services to local business owners.
- Continue to advocate for local companies to use local suppliers, especially for expansion and new construction projects.

Goal #3: Implement and Enhance the Infrastructure that Connects, Sustains and Ensures the Safety and Resiliency of the Region and its Economy



Rain Garden at Community Field, Holyoke

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

Strategy #1: Enhance High-Tech and Conventional Infrastructure

Strategy #2: Increase Use of 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: Revitalize and Protect the Connecticut River and its Watershed



Implementation Team for Goal #3:

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission*

Franklin Regional Council of Governments*

Connecticut River Clean-up Committee

WMA Connect/MBI

Valley Development Council

Pioneer Valley Regional Housing Advisory Committee

**Lead implementers*

Selected progress on this goal area includes:

- A grand re-opening of Springfield's Union Station was held on June 25, 2017 after the station had been closed for over 40 years. The circa 1926 building has been fully renovated and the site upgraded to provide bus service and a parking garage. On the main station floor, amenities include a coffee shop, convenience store, sandwich shop, car rental facility and full-service restaurant. Office space is available on the second and third floors and is partially filled.



- Aer Lingus launched direct, non-stop service from Bradley International Airport to Dublin, Ireland, and discount airline Norwegian Air is now offering non-stop service to Edinburgh, Scotland. Another new low-budget carrier, Spirit Airlines, is providing non-stop service to South Carolina and two locations in Florida.
- The Northern New England Intercity Rail Initiative study was completed, examining the opportunities and impacts of more frequent and higher speed passenger rail service on two rail corridors known as the Inland Route and the Boston-to-Montreal Route. The study recommends additional service on both routes; however, an incremental approach to implementation will be necessary due to funding limitations.

❖ Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and Economic Development District

- The communities of Northampton, Amherst, Holyoke, South Hadley, and Springfield, along with the University of Massachusetts and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission are collaborating on a bike share project. \$1.1 million of Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration has been secured to fund bikes and bike stations.



- The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center awarded grant funding under a wide range of programs to support innovative, early-stage clean energy companies, such as a company in Longmeadow that has developed engine technology to eliminate unnecessary idling and reduce fuel consumption in trucking fleets.
- Nine additional Pioneer Valley communities were designated as “Green Communities” by the state’s Department of Energy Resources (DOER), enabling them to access grant funding for energy-efficiency and clean energy projects.
- Broadband services in the Pioneer Valley have expanded over the past year and will continue to be extended through the Massachusetts Broadband Institute’s “Last Mile” programs. An increased number of local electric light districts are now providing high-speed fiber optic services to businesses and/or residences. For example, Whip City Fiber in Westfield is now offering high-speed fiber optic service to the home, and Greenfield has a community-owned hybrid fiber/wireless network available to all residents and businesses.
- The Westfield Transit Pavilion was completed in April, and PVRTA services are now available at the site.



- The Connecticut River Clean-up Committee (CRCC) secured inclusion of \$10 million in the state's Environmental Bond to address combined sewer overflows (CSOs) on the

Connecticut River, and worked in partnership with the state to secure the release of \$1.5 million in state funds as well.

- The Connecticut River Watershed Council and 16 partners launched the ninth year of the Connecticut River water sampling program. River users can visit the "Is It Clean" web page located at www.ConnecticutRiver.us to find bacteria test results at more than 147 river access and recreation sites in New England.



PVPC Staff and Volunteers Conducting Water Sampling

- Way Finders is the new name for the former HAP Housing, which is now in strategic partnerships with MBL Housing and Development of Amherst and Common Capital of Holyoke. This will increase the capacity of all three partners to provide housing and home-financing, small business loans, and community development assistance.

Specific objectives for 2017-18 include:

- Continue to pursue increased north-south service along the Amtrak Vermonter corridor in Massachusetts to provide daily commuter service between Springfield and Greenfield and more frequent service to other destinations linked to the Vermonter line, including New York City and Washington, D.C.
- Continue advocacy for expanded high-speed passenger rail from Springfield to Boston (the "inland route") as well as to Montreal.
- Upgrade the Massachusetts segment of the New England Central freight rail corridor to achieve the current weight standard.
- Continue to build out the last mile of broadband to unserved and underserved communities through public-private partnerships.
- The agreement established the commitment of the partnership municipalities and institutions to move forward with a pilot scale bike share program that will include a combined total of 29 stations and 290 smart bicycles.
- Complete I-91 Viaduct Alternatives Study identifying existing issues and evaluating alternative alignments for the viaduct section, including examination of possible at-grade and below-grade alternatives.

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. This leadership must engage with those it serves on a regular basis to ensure that needs are being met. 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. Strategies to address these issues include:

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



Healing Racism Institute of Pioneer Valley – Executive Director and Board Members

Implementation Team for Goal #4:

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission*
Franklin Regional Council of Governments
Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation
Community Foundation of Western MA
Leadership Pioneer Valley*
Healing Racism Institute of Pioneer Valley
* *Lead Implementers*

Selected progress on this goal area includes:

- Leadership Pioneer Valley celebrated the 5th Anniversary of its inaugural class last fall and will graduate its sixth class this June 2017, for a cumulative total of 215 graduates. LPV participants participate in trainings, workshops and regional visits to area leaders. They also work with local non-profits on projects each year, resulting in improved outcomes for programs such as Junior Achievement, the Holyoke Youth Task Force, Western MA Food Bank, and many others.
- Leadership Pioneer Valley has held a second successful year of Leadership 2.0, a series of more advanced seminars for LPV alumni and others.
- The Leadership Institute for Political and Public Impact (LIPPI) run by the Women’s Fund graduated 27 women in 2016, while the Springfield Leadership Institute graduated 32 people and Leadership Holyoke graduated 34.
- The Healing Racism Institute of Pioneer Valley, which grew out of a City2City Pioneer Valley visit to Grand Rapids, Michigan, has been offering 2-day Healing Racism sessions for the past three years, in which more than 500 key community stakeholders in over 170 organizations have participated. The program is also training additional local facilitators to assist in future sessions.



- Make-It Springfield began as a temporary, pop-up “makerspace” on Worthington Street, but has been so successful that it continues to offer classes, workshops, art exhibits, lectures, and other events, mostly free of charge. The project is part of the MassDevelopment Transformative Development Initiative in the Innovation District of downtown Springfield.

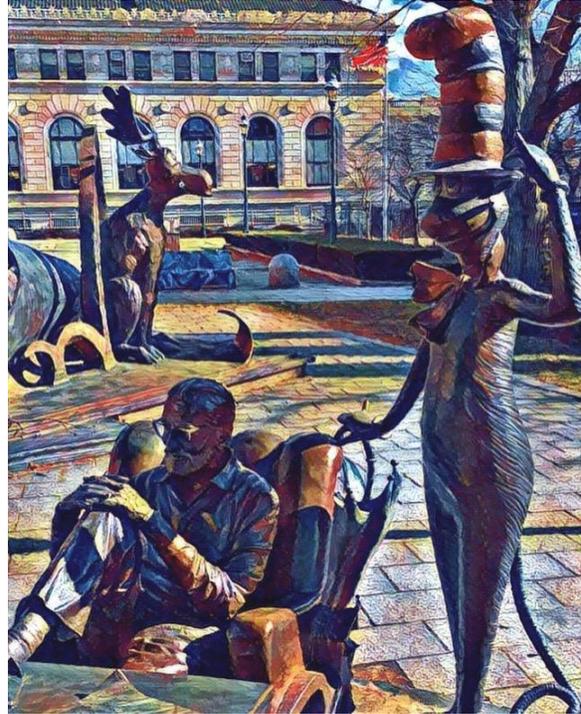
- PVPC evaluated and revised the accountability measures and dashboard metrics for the Plan for Progress in light of the new goals and strategies established in 2015.

❖ Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and Economic Development District

- New venues such as Gateway City Arts in Holyoke and Make-It Springfield, the revitalized Bing Arts Center in Springfield, and the newly established Northampton Community Arts Trust are increasing broad access to art and creative ventures.

Specific objectives for 2017-18 include:

- Continue to encourage community engagement strategies that included under-represented populations (immigrant, ethnic minority, low-income and geographically isolated).
- Increase awareness and utilization of the Plan for Progress through outreach and advocacy by Plan for Progress members and implementers.



2017 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 2016, Holyoke Community College was awarded \$1.55 million for the renovation of the existing Cubit Building in Holyoke's Innovation District to establish the Center for Hospitality and Culinary Excellence, a state-of-the-art workforce training facility.
- In 2014, the City of Springfield was awarded \$1.3 million for the Springfield Job Creation/Technical Training Facility, an 11,400-square-foot facility that provides space to conduct work skills training in the precision manufacturing and construction trades industry.
- 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 four Pioneer Valley communities – Springfield, Holyoke, Chicopee, and Ludlow – for inclusion in the 2017 CEDS. Most of the projects are located in municipalities or neighborhoods that directly meet EDA Distress Criteria, while some may be eligible due to their potential for providing jobs to residents of adjacent distressed communities. All eight projects are shown in Table 1. Communities submitting projects for this list expect to apply for EDA Public Works funding during the upcoming 12 to 18 months.

Table 1: Summary of EDA Public Works Project Proposals for 2017 CEDS Annual Update

Community	Proposed Project Title	Project Type	2016 Project Re-Submittal?	EDA Funding Needed in 2017-18?	Total Est. Project Cost	Local \$ Match in Place?	# Perm. Jobs Created
Springfield	Court Square (Elm Street) Redevelopment	Redevelopment of historic downtown building for mixed uses	No	Yes	\$30 million	No	50
Springfield	Gunn Block Redevelopment	Rehabilitation of vacant building	No	TBD	\$4.8 million	Yes	15-20
Springfield	Lower Maple Business Park	Rehabilitation of three historic buildings and vacant lot for commercial/office uses	No	TBD	\$4.3 million	Yes	Up to 20
Holyoke	South Holyoke Redevelopment	Mixed use development	No	TBD	\$10.5 million	Yes	30
Holyoke	Lynch School	Redevelopment of former high school	No	TBD	TBD	No	TBD
Holyoke	Victory Theater	Redevelopment of historic theater in downtown for cultural/commercial uses	Yes	TBD	TBD	No	TBD
Chicopee	Westover Air Park South	Infrastructure improvements for 88-acre industrial park	Yes	TBD	\$5 million	No	2,000
Ludlow	Riverside Drive at Ludlow Mills	Infrastructure to access mixed use development	Yes	Yes	\$7 million	No	2,300

Regional Economic Performance Indicators

Summary

The Plan for Progress Performance Indicators are a set of quantitative benchmarks that assist in identifying economic trends and measuring progress towards the goals of the Pioneer Valley Plan for Progress. In order to provide a highly objective, measurable method of accountability, this quantitative system complements the qualitative assessments discussed above. The system 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).

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.

Rating Scale

Each indicator was assigned a rating of positive, negative, or neutral, based on the most recent annual trend in the data available. 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.

	<p>Positive Trend More than a 1% change in a positive direction.</p>
	<p>Neutral Trend Less than a 1% change in any direction.</p>
	<p>Negative Trend More than a 1% change in a negative direction</p>

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 major goal area with a summary of the data and data source for each indicator.

Pioneer Valley Plan for Progress Performance Indicators - Pioneer Valley (3 Counties)

Goal #1: Develop and maintain a globally competitive and regionally engaged talent pool							
Measure	Indicator	Prior Data	Year	Current Data	Year	Annual Change	Rating
Early Education Enrollment	Enrollment In Early Education/Preschool Programs For 3 & 4 Year Olds	55.6%	2014	54.1%	2015	-2.8%	bad
3rd Grade Reading Proficiency	MCAS 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency	49.8%	2014	NA		NA	no trend
High School Graduation Rate	5 Year High School Graduation Rate	85.3%	2014	87.2%	2015	2.2%	good
Community College Graduates	# Of Graduates From Community Colleges in Region	2,155	2015	2,043	2016	-5.2%	bad
Educational Attainment Of Workforce	% Of Workforce 25 And Older With 4 Year Degree	31.7%	2014	31.4%	2015	-0.9%	neutral
Workforce Training Participation	# Of People Served By Workforce Training Programs	6,230	FY2015	8,078	FY2016	29.7%	good
Unemployment	Unemployment Rate	5.9%	2015	4.4%	2016	-25.4%	good
Goal #2: Foster an environment where established, new, and growing businesses and organizations thrive							
Measure	Indicator	Prior Data	Year	Current Data	Year	Annual Change	Rating
Employers	Total Establishments	23,740	2014	24,565	2015	3.5%	good
Jobs	Total Jobs	287,946	2014	292,366	2015	1.5%	good
Sites Ready For Development	# Of Pre-Permitted Sites	18	2012	8	2015	-18.5%	bad
Low Income and Poverty	% Of Population With Income Below 200% Of Poverty Line	33.7%	2014	33.8%	2015	0.2%	neutral

Pioneer Valley Plan for Progress Performance Indicators (Continued) - Pioneer Valley (3 Counties)

Goal #3: Implement and enhance the infrastructure that connects, sustains, and ensures the safety and resiliency of the region							
Measure	Indicator	Prior Data	Year	Current Data	Year	Annual Change	Rating
High Speed Internet	% Of Communities/Population With Access To Broadband/High Speed Internet (25 MPS Download)	94.8	2013	95.3	2014	0.5%	neutral
Road Pavement Conditions*	Overall Condition Index (OCI)	77.6	2011	65.6	2015	-3.9%	bad
Transit Ridership	Total Annual Rides On PVTA, FRTA, And Amtrak Trains Within The Region	12,710,937	FY2015	12,774,727	FY2016	0.5%	neutral
Bike Infrastructure	Completed Bike Facility Mileage			148.07	2013	NA	no trend
Transportation + Housing Costs	Combined Transportation And Housing Costs As A Percent Of Income			52%	2008-2012	NA	no trend
Affordable Housing	# Of Communities Meeting 10% Affordable Housing Threshold	9	2014	8	2016	-5.6%	bad
Home Ownership	% Of Housing Units That Are Owner Occupied	61.10%	2014	63.21%	2015	3.4%	good
Combined Sewer Overflow Reductions	Total # Of CSOs Feeding Into The CT River Or Its Tributaries	61	2014	59	2016	-3.3%	good
Goal #4: Conduct economic development activities in a regionally responsible manner, prioritizing collaboration and engagement							
Measure	Indicator	Prior Data	Year	Current Data	Year	Annual Change	Rating
Income Inequality (Gini Coefficient)	Gini Coefficient Of Income Inequality						no trend
	Hampden County	0.470	2014	0.465	2015	-0.9%	neutral
	Hampshire County	0.469	2014	0.476	2015	1.5%	bad
	Franklin County	0.441	2014	0.449	2015	2.0%	bad
State Funding - Non-School Local Aid	% Of Statewide Non-School Local Aid Per Capita That Goes To The Region	\$221.77	FY2016	\$236.97	FY2017	6.9%	good
Leadership Program Participation	# Of Graduates From All Leadership Programs In The Region	106	2015	100	2016	-5.7%	bad
Registered Voters	Voter Participation Rates	82.70%	2014	85.26%	2016	1.6%	good

Notes: *Road Pavement Conditions only include Hampshire and Hampden Counties. Comparable data not available for Franklin County. Income Inequality is measured by the Gini coefficient and ranges from 0 to 1. Numbers closer to one indicate more income inequality.

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

Early Education Enrollment

Early childhood education helps provide the opportunities necessary for positive development at this young and critical age. It is now supported by extensive research that a high quality early childhood education experience has significant long-term effects on a person’s life outcomes ranging from their achievement in K-12 school, their economic success, or the probability that they will be involved in the juvenile justice system.

Early childhood education is now recognized as a critical early phase of the cradle-to-career pipeline that takes a comprehensive, long term view of workforce and economic development. The percent of all 3- and 4-year olds who are enrolled in any type of formal early education program (public, private, family child care, center-based preschool) are examined in this indicator. Data is estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey.

Between 2014 and 2015, the percent of children enrolled in early childhood education programs decreased at a rate of 2.8% across the Pioneer Valley. Hampshire and Hampden counties saw decreases of 2.8% and 2.1%, respectively, while in Franklin County, the percentage dropped by nearly 14%.

It is important to note that these data points are estimates based on a sample of the population, and there are margins of error associated with them. In this particular case, the margins of error for Franklin County are particularly large, so it’s quite possible that, while there was likely a decrease in enrollment in Franklin County, it was not necessarily of the dramatic extreme that these estimates suggest.

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

Trend	Rating
-2.8%	

3rd Grade Reading Proficiency

In an educational environment increasingly requiring quantitative measures of achievement and accountability, scores from standardized tests are used to “identify the strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction” at the local level and to hold schools and school districts accountable with respect to “established standards for performance for districts that improve or fail to improve student academic performance.”*

Educational development standards indicate that students should be able to read proficiently by the end of third grade, that is, have a wide vocabulary, comprehend, write logically, speak coherently, read fluently and understand different types of texts. Beginning in fourth grade, all these skills are necessary for them to progress with more challenging work.

In past reports, The percent of all children in the third grade who received a score of “proficient” or higher on the MCAS English language arts test was used to reflect early literacy skills achieved during formal early childhood education. However, to further align testing with Common Core Standards, in 2015 the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education began administering a new test called the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). This transition from MCAS to PARC is an ongoing process. Although many school districts are now using this test, some are continuing to use an updated version of the MCAS, which includes only some elements of the PARCC. These changes have made for a different assessment system than years past, which makes data difficult to compare not only from year-to-year but also between communities. As such, this indicator is not included for this year, but will be included in future Plan for Progress reports as the data become more comparable over time.

Trend	Rating
Trend Data Not Available	

**MA DESE*

*** In 2014, some third-grade students in the region took the PARCC test rather than the MCAS test. Only MCAS score results are presented in this report (thus, the sample size in 2014 is smaller than it is for 2013.)*

Source: MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)

High School Graduation Rate

High school graduation rates are a vital component in assessing the status of individuals and communities because educational attainment has a strong influence on future work and earning potential as well as the ability to constructively contribute to one’s community. Graduating from high school has become a minimum requirement for participation in most of our nation’s economy. The percent of all students enrolled in grades nine through twelve who graduate within 5 years or less is measured in this indicator. The rate is adjusted for students who transfer in or out of the schools, and thus measures only those students who began at a given school and graduated from that same school.

Trend	Rating
+2.2%	

Across the region, there was an increase of 2.2 percent in graduation rates between 2014 and 2015. This increase was largely driven by Franklin County, which experienced an increase of 4.3 percent. Although Hampden County experienced a 2.7% drop, the urban core cities of Springfield or Holyoke showed positive trends, experiencing a 6% increase and 1.2% increase in high school graduation rates, respectively.

Source: MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Community College Graduates

Most of today’s well paying jobs require a credential beyond a high school degree. Associate’s degrees and/or certificates are the most accessible and promising route to a job with a living wage and a genuine career path for many. This indicator measures the number of people in the who complete an associate's degree in a given academic year at one of the three community colleges in the region - Greenfield Community College, Holyoke Community College and Springfield Technical Community College.

Trend	Rating
-5.2%	

Between 2015 and 2016, the number of community college graduates in the Pioneer Valley decreased by about 5%. This trend was consistent across all three counties.

Source: Directors of Institutional Research at Holyoke Community College, Springfield Technical Community College, Greenfield Community College

Educational Attainment of the Workforce

Higher education is increasingly necessary for long-term access to well-paying jobs. The extent of educational attainment, therefore, is indicative of a population’s ability to function and excel economically and an individual’s economic and social opportunities in life. While two-year associate’s degrees meet the needs of many positions, the bachelor’s degree is rapidly becoming a requirement for even some entry-level positions. Because a solid educational background, typically achieved during high school, is a prerequisite for getting a bachelor’s degree, this indicator also measures a community’s ability to prepare their children for college. This indicator measures the percent of the population over the age of 25 with a bachelor’s degree or higher.

Trend	Rating
-0.9%	

Across the region, attainment of bachelor’s degrees remained fairly neutral, decreasing slightly from 31.7% to 31.4% between 2014 and 2015. However, trends varied considerably throughout the region. Hampden County and Franklin County experienced decreases of 5.8% and 4.2% respectively, while Hampshire County experienced an increase of 10.4%.

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

Workforce Training Participation

Not all jobs require a bachelor’s degree to be effective, and not all bachelor’s degrees teach the specific skills that each job requires. People switch careers later in life and need specific training to learn skills that will support that shift. The Plan for Progress recognizes that a robust pipeline to a skilled workforce involves training people at all levels of skill and experience for a wide variety of jobs. This indicator evaluates the level of participation in programs that train people with specific skills to prepare them for jobs in the workforce. Data includes the number of people who take part in job skills training programs through the Regional Employment Boards or one of the three community colleges within the region. The majority of these are non-credit courses through the community colleges.

Trend	Rating
+29.7%	

Between FY2015 and FY2016, the number of participants in workforce training programs increased significantly across the region, from 6,230 to 8,078 – an increase of almost 30%. This trend was driven largely by Hampden County, which saw an increase of about 41% between FY2015 and FY2016. Franklin and Hampshire Counties experienced a lower but still considerable increase of 8.3% during this time.

Note: Data is aggregated by fiscal year, and some duplication of totals is possible as the REBs and colleges may have the same students.

Source: Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, Hampshire/Franklin Regional Employment Board, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

Unemployment

The unemployment rate, produced by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, is the percentage of people in the labor force who do not have a job (the labor force is the sum of those who have a job and those who are looking for a job). Unemployment rates are frequently used to report on the state of the economy: a high unemployment rate can indicate a shrinking economy. Furthermore, unemployment rates give an idea of the portion of a community’s population that is financially insecure because they do not have a job. It should be noted that because unemployment rates are calculated based on a percentage of the people who are looking for work, it is actually an undercount of the total number of unemployed people who may actually wish to be employed. The unemployment rate does not include people who left the official labor force. This too is a significant factor as it underscores the growing portion of the population who are no longer considered employable for any number of reasons.

Trend	Rating
-25.4%	

The Pioneer Valley experienced a significant drop in unemployment between 2015 and 2016, with the number of unemployed people decreasing 25.4% in one year. All three counties in the region experienced similar and significant drops. Franklin County and Hampden County had the largest proportional decreases, each of decreasing just over 26 percent.

Source: MA Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

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

Employers

Another method of measuring the strength of an economy and the opportunities within it is to count the total number of employer businesses that exist. When an economy is strong, there are appropriate economic development supports, and when confidence is high, existing businesses are more likely to stay operating and within the region. What’s more, businesses from outside of the region are more likely to relocate here, and local entrepreneurs are more likely to start to grow a business. This indicator measures the total number of establishments in the area that have more than one employee.

Trend	Rating
+3.5%	

Between 2014 and 2015, the Pioneer Valley region saw an increase of 825 employers, representing a rate of growth of 3.5%. While all three counties in the region experience similar trends, the largest area of growth was in Hampden County and within the urban core cities of Springfield and Holyoke.

Source: MA Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

Jobs

In addition to measuring the number of employers supported by an economy, measuring the total number of jobs reflects the size and strength of those employers. It gives perspective on the number of employment opportunities that exist within the region. Additionally, the number of jobs can add nuance to unemployment rates. For example, increased unemployment coinciding with increased jobs may suggest that a larger portion of the employment opportunities are part time and people are working multiple jobs at the same time rather than more people getting full time jobs. This indicator measures the total number of jobs that exist in an area.

Trend	Rating
+1.5%	

Between 2014 and 2015, the Pioneer Valley saw a slight increase in the number of jobs by 1.5 percent. This trend was seen in each county, with all three experiencing increases in the number of jobs throughout the year.

Source: MA Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

Properties Ready for Development

A critical component to a region’s economic competitiveness is whether vacant commercial properties are available and ready to be used by companies who may want to grow within, or move to, the area. If properties are polluted or have buildings that need to be demolished, the likelihood of new employer prospects choosing that site are significantly diminished. This indicator measures the number of commercial properties that are pre-permitted by WestMass Area Development Corporation and are ready for occupancy.

Trend	Rating
0%	

Between 2015 and 2016, the number of sites ready for development in the Pioneer Valley remained the same. Most pre-permitted sites are located in Hampden County, with one site in Hampshire County.

Source: WestMass Development Corporation

Low Income and Poverty

Poverty rates are an important indicator of what portion of a community’s population likely lacks the necessary resources to provide for themselves or their families. The most widely used measure of poverty is the federal poverty rate, which is the percentage of all people who are living in households with incomes that fall below the federal poverty line. The poverty line is established based on the current cost of basic goods and services (such as food, housing, transportation, and other goods and services), and what proportion of family income is spent on those items. While the threshold is adjusted over time and is dependent on family size and ages of family members, it is increasingly thought to understate the extent of poverty. The threshold in 2015 was \$15,930 for a two person household – a very low level of income given that a low-cost one-bedroom apartment in western Massachusetts will typically rent for more than \$8,800 per year.

Trend	Rating
+0.2%	

Because the federal poverty line is so low and generally misses a large portion of the population who are in economic distress, this indicator measures the percentage of the population living below 200% of that line. Poverty rates are calculated by the U.S. Census Bureau based on the income and number of people in each household.

One out of every three people in the Pioneer Valley live in households with incomes below 200% of the poverty line. Across the region, that rate remained relatively stable, increasing only slightly from 33.7% in 2014 to 33.8% in 2015. However, the trend varied by county, with Franklin County residents experiencing a large decrease of 7.1%, Hampshire County residents experiencing an increase of 6.6%, and and Hampden County remaining stable with just a slight decrease of 0.4%.

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

Goal #3: Implement and Enhance the Infrastructure that Connects, Sustains and Ensures the Safety and Resiliency of the Region and its Economy

High Speed Internet

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. High-speed internet access has become a core requirement for economic development well beyond technology and business fields. It is now an expected service for most businesses, governments, and educational institutions, even for activities like elementary school homework. This indicator measures the percent of the population with access to high speed internet, as defined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). In 2015, the FCC increased the download speed standard for broadband, which is now 25Mbps.

Trend	Rating
+0.5%	

Between 2013 and 2014, the percent of the population with access to high-speed internet remained stable, increasing just 0.5% (from 94.8 to 95.3%). This rate is just under the Massachusetts state average of 97%, and above the national average of 85.3 percent.

The FCC recently updated their standards and calculations on this measure. These new standards are not easily comparable to previous measures. For this reason, there is not yet trend data for 2015 and 2016. Future reports will provide trends based on this new standard.

Source: US Dept of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, State Broadband Initiative (CSV format June 31, 2013).

Bridge Conditions

Safe and efficient transportation of people and goods are essential to an economically vibrant region. The network of roads and bridges must continue to be developed and maintained as both are degraded by use and weather over time. Bridges are considered structurally deficient through a rating system developed by the Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). A bridge is deemed “structurally deficient” when it scores poorly on “structural adequacy, functional obsolescence and serviceability” by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT). Since 2008, MassDOT’s Accelerated Bridge Program sought to identify and reduce the number of structurally deficient bridges across the state, several of which are located across the Pioneer Valley. This indicator measures the total number of bridges deemed structurally deficient within the region. The data was only available for bridges eligible for federal aid.

Trend	Rating
Data Available Soon	

Source: MassDOT

Road Pavement Conditions

Similar to bridge maintenance, quality of road pavement conditions affect freight deliveries, tourism, and daily commuters. Road pavement conditions are measured using the Overall Condition Index (OCI). While the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission collects data for all 43 municipalities in the region, the Franklin Regional Council of Governments conducts a survey of road conditions in Franklin County using a different system. Thus, a comparison between the two areas is not possible. OCI values span from 0 to 100, where zero indicates that the road is impassable and 100 indicates that a road is in excellent condition. Average OCIs are computed for each community for the total number of miles of road eligible to receive federal aid.

Trend	Rating
-3.9%	

Most recently, data was collected for the Pioneer Valley Region (Hampden & Hampshire Counties) in 2011 and again in 2015. During this time, pavement conditions across the Pioneer

❖ Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and Economic Development District

Valley region worsened by an average of 3.9% annually. Trends were fairly similar in both counties, though the decrease was more significant in Hampden County which experienced an average annual drop of 4.4 percent.

Source: Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

Transit Ridership

Public transit use and access directly reflect the degree to which a regional transit network and its corresponding schedules meet the needs of residents, workers, and employers. An effective public transit system with extensive, regular ridership decreases traffic and travel times, reduces pollution, and creates desirable places to live and work for a diverse area of people. People who cannot afford cars or would rather not drive them on a regular basis are more likely to live near extensive and efficient public transit networks. In this scenario, businesses are also more accessible to employees and customers. This indicator measures the total annual rides on the two major transit authorities within the region (PVTA and FRTA) as well as Amtrak trains that service the region.

Trend	Rating
+0.5%	

Between FY2015 and FY2016, total transit ridership remained fairly stable, increasing by just 0.5 percent. Trends varied across transit types. Bus ridership in the Pioneer Valley saw a modest increase of 0.73%, with PVTA ridership steadily growing and FRTA ridership experiencing a modest decline. At the same time, the region experienced a significant decrease in Amtrak riders coming in and out of Springfield – nearly 31,000 less passengers (-25%). While there were some increases in passenger rail riders north of Springfield in both Holyoke and Northampton that can be attributed to new stations and recently upgraded routes, this only accounted for about 6,500 riders. Much of the remaining decrease is likely due to construction that is being done south of Springfield on the tracks in Connecticut which have required passengers to be bused between New Haven, CT and Springfield, MA.

Source: Amtrak, Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA), and Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA)

Bike Infrastructure

Bicycling is generally regarded as one of the most efficient means of transportation - both for the user and the environment at large. Providing and continually extending bicycle-friendly paths can assist communities improve connectivity between destinations, provide transportation options to all users, and reduce the transportation impacts on the environment. The availability of bicycle transportation is also an important factor in individual health outcomes. This indicator measures the total number of miles of on and off-road improved bike facilities. 'Bike facilities' is a broad term that encompasses sign-posted in-road bike routes, bike lanes, shared use paths and paved bike shoulders.

Trend	Rating
Trend Data Not Yet Available	

At this time, there is only one year of data available for this indicator. In 2013, a total of 148 miles of bike facilities existed across the Pioneer Valley. Since that time, many proposed bike facilities been built, but the exact number of additional miles is not yet compiled. Bike facilities in the region seem to be concentrated in the more rural and less populated areas of the region. Nearly half of these bike facilities are located within Franklin County (63.4 miles), while Hampshire County has about one third of the facilities and Hampden County has just under 25 percent.

Source: Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, MassGIS

Transportation & Housing Costs

Transportation and housing are generally the two most significant expenses for households. As a result, a region’s affordability is increasingly being examined specifically based on the cost of these two major domains. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has developed a method of examining these factors in relation to income by comparing these combined average expenses as a percent of household incomes. This measure is called the Location Affordability Index (LAI). For this indicator, the average household contains four people, two of whom commute.

Trend	Rating
Trend Data Not Yet Available	

The LAI is not calculated annually, and the most recent data was published in 2012, and was based on Census data from 2008-2012. At that time, an average four person household with two commuters in the Pioneer Valley spent about 52% of the household's income on housing and transportation costs.

New data is expected to be released later in 2017.

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Location Affordability Index

Affordable Housing

The economic competitiveness of a region depends on the ability of workers of all income levels to find reasonably affordable housing. The state’s Comprehensive Permit Law, alternatively called “Chapter 40B” was adopted in 1969 to address racial and economic segregation, shortages in decent housing, inner city poverty, and exclusionary zoning practices in suburban and rural communities. It compels communities to have at least 10 percent of all housing set aside as affordable housing that is protected by long-term affordability restrictions. Communities below 10 percent must allow a streamlined process for proposed housing developments on the condition that 25 percent or more of the proposed units are reserved for low or moderate income households. This indicator measures the percent of all housing units in a community that are designated as subsidized housing units. Not included in this indicator is housing that is affordable, but does not have established long-term affordability restrictions attached to the property.

Trend	Rating
-5.6%	

In 2014, there were nine communities in the Pioneer Valley that met this requirement, including many of the larger municipalities. Two years later, in 2016, there were eight communities, making for an average annual decrease of about 5.6 percent.

Source: MA Department of Housing and Community Development, Subsidized Housing Inventory

Home Ownership

Home ownership is a significant indicator of economic security. The primary financial investment for the vast majority of people in the U.S. is their home. Home ownership also strengthens communities by building a strong connection between people and the place they live. However, the downside of a high owner-occupancy rate is that rental options for young, old, or transitional populations are limited. A lack of rental options, often supported by local zoning regulations, can also help to perpetuate socio-economic segregation throughout the region. Home ownership is expressed as the percent of all housing units that are occupied by the property's owner. This indicator measures the percentage of housing units (including condominiums, apartments, houses, and mobile homes) that are occupied by the owner, as opposed to a renter. The American Community Survey collects and analyzes this data, and provides estimates on an annual basis.

Trend	Rating
+3.4%	

The percent of owner-occupied housing units in the Pioneer Valley increased from 61.1% in 2014 to 63.2% in 2015. This trend was consistent across Hampden and Hampshire counties, with each experiencing increases around 4 percent. Franklin County remained stable, decreasing less than 1 percent.

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

Combined Sewer Overflows

Ordinarily, storm water is sent to a wastewater treatment plant before it is emptied to a river. However, during high rainfall events, treatment plants may not be able to process all wastewater. Combined sewer overflows (CSOs) were built as a way to deal with this excess wastewater, essentially bypassing the treatment plant. However, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) is working to reduce the amount of active CSOs across the state in an effort to reduce water pollution. MassDEP's Western Regional Office maintains a list of active CSOs within the region.

Trend	Rating
-3.3%	

Between 2014 and 2016, the number of CSOs draining to the Connecticut River or its tributaries fell from 61 to 59, for an average decrease of 3.3% per year. Both of the CSOs that were removed were located in the City of Chicopee. All remaining CSOs within the region are located throughout Hampden County.

Source: MA Department of Environmental Protection

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

Income Inequality

In addition to educational, employment, poverty, transportation, and housing indicators, the overall level of economic inequality has important economic development implications. A community with lower levels of economic inequality is more likely to have economic and social stability at a community-wide level. Income inequality is a good way to provide a snapshot of how income is distributed throughout a region. The Gini Coefficient is one way to measure a region’s level of inequality. This indicator is a measure of how income is or is not equally distributed through a particular area. The Gini Coefficient is measured on a scale of 0 to 1, where 0 is complete equality and 1 is complete inequality.

County	Trend	Rating
Hampden County	-0.9%	
Hampshire County	+1.5%	
Franklin County	+2.0%	

This particular indicator does not allow calculating income inequality across the entire Pioneer Valley in a reliable way, but rates are available within each county area.

Within the Pioneer Valley, income inequality is growing in Hampshire County and Franklin County, but remaining fairly steady in Hampden County. Between 2014 and 2015, income inequality grew 1.5% across Hampshire County and 2% across Franklin County. During this time period, Hampshire County surpassed Hampden County in having more inequality between residents of the county.

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

State Funding - Non-School Local Aid

Local aid provided by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to municipalities is a significant source of budget revenue. While much of this aid provides funding for the local school system, it also funds veterans benefits, public libraries and general community programming. Municipalities track their funding on ‘Cherry Sheets’ which are maintained by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue.

Trend	Rating
+6.9%	

Total non-school local aid increased 6.9% in the Pioneer Valley between FY2016-FY2017. Increases occurred across all three counties in the region, with Hampden County experiencing the largest increase of 8.7%, which was driven largely by an 11.6% increase in local aid to Springfield. Hampshire and Franklin experienced slightly more modest increases, of 4.1% and 1.3%, respectively.

Source: MA Department of Revenue

Leadership Programs

A key strategy of the Plan for Progress is to ensure the development and mentorship of a new generation of collaborative, diverse, professional and civically engaged leaders who will ensure that the future of the Pioneer Valley continues to be bright. The region has a few specific programs designed for supporting this type of leadership.

This indicator measures the total number of graduates from all leadership programs within the region, including the Leadership Institute for Political and Public Impact (LIPPI) run by the Women’s Fund of Western Massachussetts, Leadership Pioneer Valley, Leadership Holyoke which is run by the Holyoke Chamber of Commerce, and Springfield Leadership Institute which is run by the Springfield Chamber of Commerce in partnership with Western New England College of Business.

The number of graduates from these leadership programs decreased by 5.7% between 2015 and 2016.

Source: Leadership Pioneer Valley, Springfield Leadership Institute, Leadership Holyoke

Trend	Rating
-5.7%	

Active Voters

Voter registration is one indicator measuring the level of citizen engagement in the political process and the civic concerns of their community. Low voter registration rates can be interpreted in many ways. Some argue that low voter registration rates reflect a citizenry’s lack of interest in the political process, a disconnection between citizen and government, and a sentiment that participation does not affect

outcomes. Another interpretation of low voter registration is that this trend reflects a citizenry that is satisfied with the status quo. Language and educational barriers also influence voter registration rates by inhibiting participation. Voter registration rates are, in some ways, a better indicator of civic participation than voter turnout rates because the former do not reflect as much year-to-year variation based on the issues or elections on the ballot. This indicator measures the total number of registered voters divided by the total population over the age of 18, which approximates the voter registration rate.

Between 2014 and 2016, the voter registration rate increased slightly, from 82.7% in 2015 to 85.3% in 2016. Increases occurred across all three counties in the region.

Source: Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth, Elections Division, U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year-Estimates

Trend	Rating
+1.6%	

APPENDIX A:
PLAN FOR PROGRESS COORDINATING COUNCIL
MEMBERSHIP

June 2017

Kathleen Anderson, *President, Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce*
Suzanne Beck, *Executive Director, Greater Northampton Chamber of Commerce*
Ellen Bemben, *President, T2 Foundation*
Debra Boronski, *Western MA Regional Director, Massachusetts Office of Business Development*
Timothy Brennan, *Executive Director, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission*
Patricia Crosby, *Executive Director, Franklin/Hampshire Regional Employment Board*
Dianne Fuller Doherty, *Senior Business Advisor, Massachusetts Small Business Development Center*
Kathleen Dowd, *Director, Human Service Forum, Inc.*
Linda Dunlavy, *Executive Director, Franklin Regional Council of Governments*
Jonathan Edwards, *Director of Strategic Partnerships, Tech Foundry*
Martha Field, Ph.D., *Professor, Economics & Business, Greenfield Community College*
Brooks Fitch, *Consultant*
Thom Fox, *Chief People Officer, Giombetti Associates*
Nicole Griffin, *President and CEO, Griffin Staffing Network*
Jeffrey Hayden, *Vice President, Business and Community Services, Holyoke Community College*
Daniel Hodge, *Principal, Hodge Economic Consulting*
Samalid Hogan, *Regional Director, Western Massachusetts Small Business Development Center*
David Howland, *Regional Engineer, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection*
Geoff Little, *Consultant*
Larry Martin, *Director of Employment Services and Engagement, Regional Employment Board of Hampden County*
Terence Masterson, *Economic Development Director, City of Northampton*
Laura Masulis, *Transformative Development Fellow, MassDevelopment*
Kevin Maynard, *Attorney, Bulkley, Richardson and Gelinas and Chairman, Leadership Pioneer Valley*
Christina Royal, Ph.D., *President, Holyoke Community College*
Marikate Murren, *Vice President of Human Resources, MGM Springfield*
Russell Peotter, *Advisor, WGBY - 57*
Katherine Putnam, *Chief Strategy Officer, Tursus LLC and Mentor, MIT Venture Mentoring*
Robert Reckman, *Northampton Chamber of Commerce and Fairgrounds Redevelopment Corporation*
James Shriver, *Chairman, Chamber Energy Coalition, Inc.*
Christopher Sikes, *Chief Executive Officer, Common Capital*
Richard Sullivan, *President/CEO, Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts*
Michael Suzor, *Assistant to the President, Springfield Technical Community College*
Rebecca Townsend, *Professor of Communication and Chair, Dept. of Communications and Humanities, Manchester Community College*
Oreste Varela, *Springfield Branch Manager, U.S. Small Business Administration*
Mary Walachy, *Executive Director, Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation*
Kwame Webster, *Managing Director, Teach for America – Western Massachusetts*
Lora Wondolowski, *Executive Director, Leadership Pioneer Valley*
David Woods, *Principal, Woods Financial Group*
Katie Zobel, *President, Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts*

