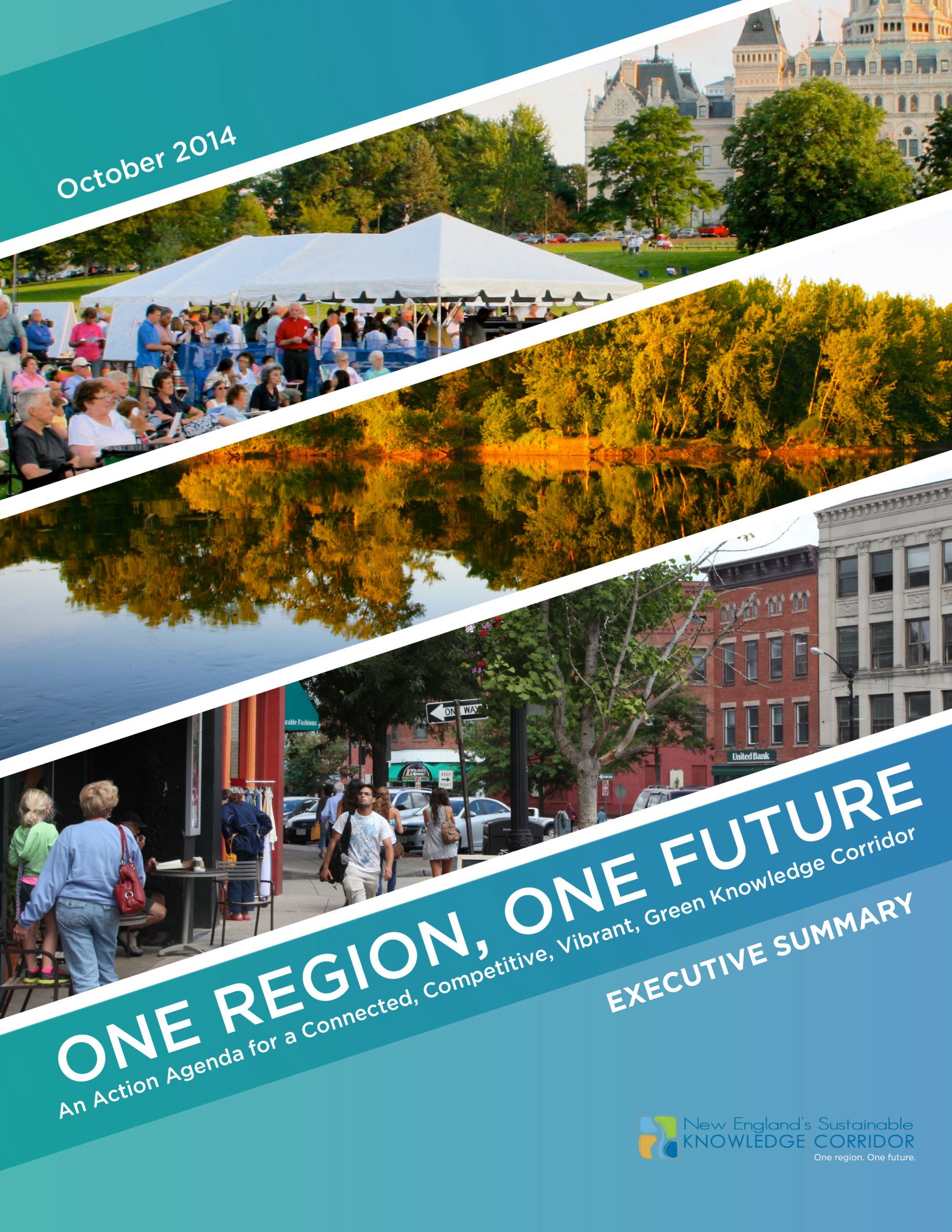


October 2014



ONE REGION, ONE FUTURE

An Action Agenda for a Connected, Competitive, Vibrant, Green Knowledge Corridor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



New England's Sustainable
KNOWLEDGE CORRIDOR

One region. One future.

www.SustainableKnowledgeCorridor.org

This action agenda was prepared by the Sustainable Knowledge Corridor Consortium, a partnership made up of representatives from the following Connecticut and Massachusetts municipalities and organizations. The Consortium was formed to oversee a bi-state planning project which is laying the foundation for preserving, creating and maintaining a sustainable, economically competitive and equitable Knowledge Corridor Region. All these agencies have a role to play in implementing the *One Region, One Future* vision for a connected, competitive, vibrant and green Knowledge Corridor.

Regional Planning Organizations

- Capitol Region Council of Governments
- Pioneer Valley Regional Planning Commission
- Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency

Municipalities

- City of Chicopee, MA
- Town of Enfield, CT
- City of Hartford, CT
- City of Holyoke, MA
- Town of Manchester, CT
- City of New Britain, CT
- City of Springfield, MA
- Town of Windsor, CT
- City of Northampton, MA

Educational Institutions

- Central Connecticut State University
- Goodwin College
- University of Connecticut/CLEAR
- University of Hartford
- University of Massachusetts-Amherst

Advisory State Agencies

- Connecticut Dept. of Economic & Community Development
- Connecticut Dept. of Transportation
- Connecticut Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection
- Connecticut Housing Finance Authority
- Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development
- Massachusetts Dept. of Transportation
- Massachusetts Exec. Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Community Partners

- Capital Workforce Partners
- Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA)
- Connecticut Economic Resource Center
- Connecticut Fair Housing Center
- Connecticut Housing Coalition
- Franklin/Hampshire Regional Employment Board
- Greater Hartford Transit District
- HAP Housing
- Holyoke Food and Fitness Policy Council
- Journey Home
- MetroHartford Alliance
- New England's Knowledge Corridor Partnership
- Partners for a Healthier Community
- Partnership for Strong Communities
- Pioneer Valley Asthma Coalition
- Pioneer Valley Joint Transportation Committee
- Pioneer Valley Sustainability Network
- Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTa)
- Pioneering Strategies
- Plan for Progress Coordinating Committee
- Regional Employment Board of Hampden County
- Tighe & Bond, Inc.
- United Way of Hampshire County
- United Way of Central & Northeastern Connecticut
- United Way of Pioneer Valley
- Valley Development Council
- 1,000 Friends of Connecticut

Federal Agencies

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Department of Transportation

This report was prepared by the Capitol Region Council of Governments (www.crcog.org) and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (www.pvpc.org) on behalf of the Sustainable Knowledge Corridor Consortium. The work that provided the basis for this publication was supported by funding under an award from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The substance and findings of the work are dedicated to the public. The author and publisher are solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements and interpretations contained in this publication. Such interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government.

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ONE REGION, ONE FUTURE

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Vibrant, Green Knowledge Corridor**

October 2014

Prepared for the
Sustainable Knowledge Corridor Consortium
by the
Capitol Region Council of Governments and
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

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Front - Heather Brandon, Chris Curtis (middle and bottom)

Back - Heather Brandon, Chris Curtis, Riverfront Recapture

A **VISION** and **ACTION AGENDA** for A Connected, Competitive, Vibrant, and Green Knowledge Corridor

This report presents a bi-state action agenda that will help the Knowledge Corridor achieve a connected, competitive, vibrant and green future. One in which the region:

Is **connected** to Boston and New York City, to worldwide markets, and to knowledge-sector industries;

Connected



Is **competitive** in the New England, United States, and global economy;

Competitive



Is made up of **vibrant** communities that house diverse populations, and attract and retain Millennial workers, retiring Baby Boomers, and growing businesses; and

Vibrant



Is **green**, with energy efficient homes, businesses and forms of transportation, and cleaner air and water.

Green



Photo credit: Riverfront Recapture



INTRODUCTION

One Region, One Future

In 2000, the Hartford-Springfield Economic Partnership identified their shared cross-border region as one of the leading economic engines in all of New England—and launched the Knowledge Corridor as a concept on which bi-state actions for economic development and infrastructure improvements could be focused. The Knowledge Corridor is tied together by a shared economy, history and culture, and by economic and natural assets including Bradley International Airport, rail lines, Interstate 91, many colleges and universities, and the Connecticut River. The region has many strengths, including:

- **A Well-Educated and Skilled Workforce.** The level of educational attainment here has always been a key to the region's high ranking in per capita income and economic productivity, when compared to other metropolitan areas across the country. The region has the second highest concentration of colleges and universities in the nation.

Figure 1. Educational Attainment for the Knowledge Corridor, Ages 25 and Over, 2012.

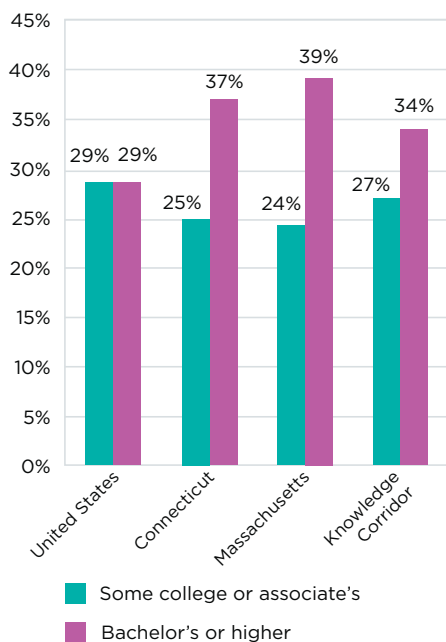


Table 1. Post-Secondary Institutions by Enrollment in the Knowledge Corridor, 2013.

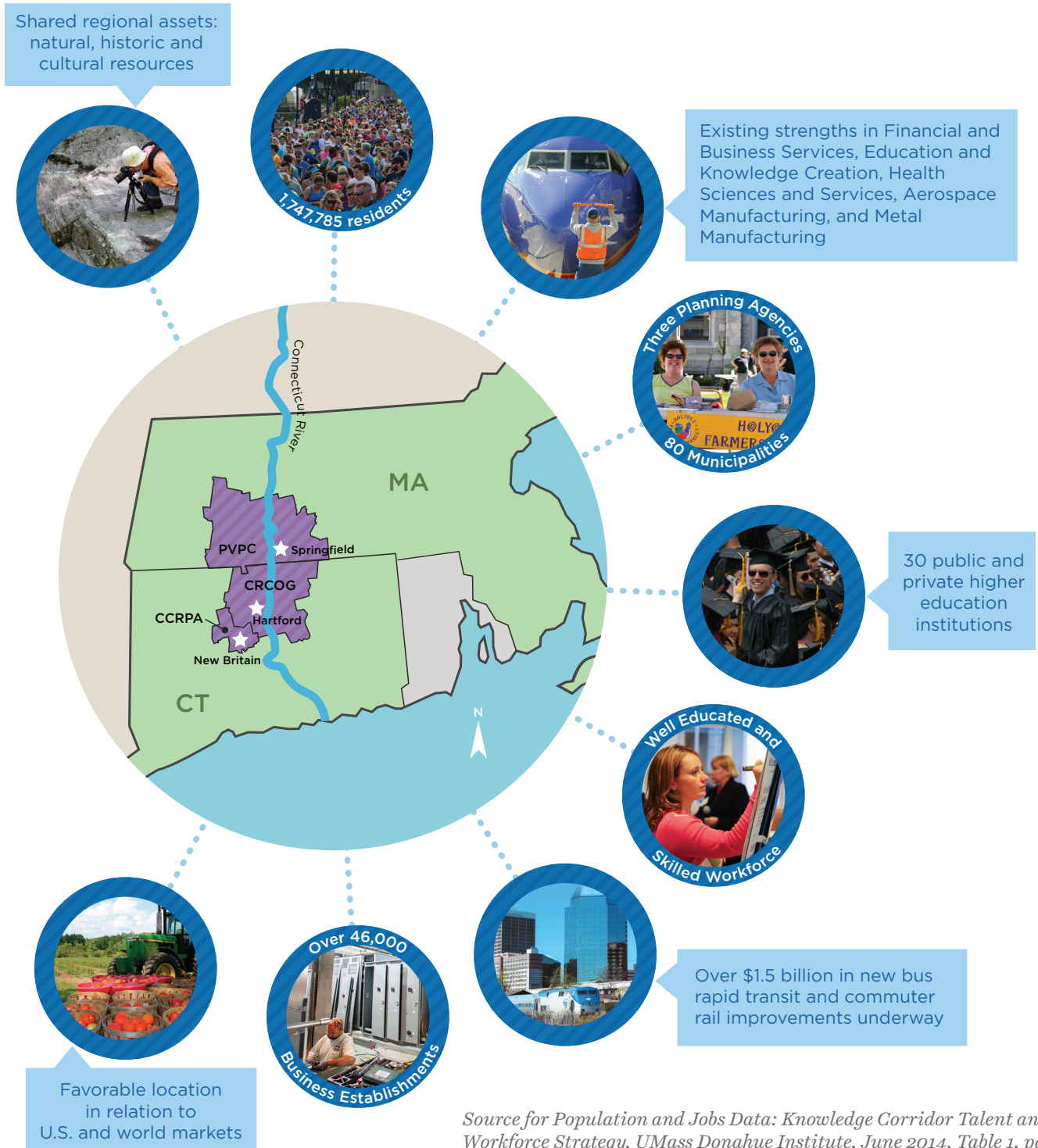
Institution	City	State	Fall 2013 Enrollment
University of Massachusetts - Amherst	Amherst	MA	28,518
University of Connecticut-Storrs and Greater Hartford	Storrs	CT	27,320
Central Connecticut State University	New Britain	CT	11,865
Manchester Community College	Manchester	CT	7,571
University of Hartford	West Hartford	CT	6,820
Springfield Technical Community College	Springfield	MA	6,792
Holyoke Community College	Holyoke	MA	6,740
Westfield State College	Westfield	MA	6,371
Tunxis Community College	Farmington	CT	4,547
Capital Community College	Hartford	CT	4,168
Western New England University	Springfield	MA	3,800
American International College	Springfield	MA	3,657
Goodwin College	East Hartford	CT	3,388
Springfield College	Springfield	MA	3,255
Smith College	Northampton	MA	3,033
University of Saint Joseph	West Hartford	CT	2,640
Trinity College	Hartford	CT	2,390
Bay Path College	Longmeadow	MA	2,357
Mount Holyoke College	South Hadley	MA	2,251
Greenfield Community College	Greenfield	MA	2,240
Amherst College	Amherst	MA	1,785
Springfield College School of Human Services	Springfield	MA	1,763
Asnuntuck Community College	Enfield	CT	1,715
Elms College (Our Lady of the Elms)	Chicopee	MA	1,678
Charter Oak State College	New Britain	CT	1,580
Hampshire College	Amherst	MA	1,492
Rensselaer Hartford Graduate Center	Hartford	CT	281
Hartford Seminary	Hartford	CT	123
Lincoln College of New England	Hartford	CT	N/A
St. Thomas Seminary	Bloomfield	CT	N/A

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, College Navigator (<http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>) September 2014.

Note: University of Connecticut enrollment includes Storrs campus plus all graduate and professional programs as well as 1,409 undergraduates at the West Hartford campus.

Sources: U.S. Census, ACS 1yr 2012; UMDI Calculations

Figure 2. Map of the Sustainable Knowledge Corridor.



Source for Population and Jobs Data: Knowledge Corridor Talent and Workforce Strategy, UMass Donahue Institute, June 2014, Table 1, page 33. Source for Sector Strengths: Sustainable Knowledge Corridor Industry Research and Geographic Synergy Analysis, CERC, December 2013, page 6.

Photo credits, clockwise from top:

Barbara Steele, Riverfront Recapture, Ed Gonzalves, Chris Curtis, Brittany Muller, FHI, Chris Curtis, Jonathan Rose Companies, Barbara Steele

- A Favorable Location in Relation to U.S. and World Markets.** The region's location is another of its competitive advantages. The Knowledge Corridor lies roughly halfway between the two economic centers of New York City and Boston, and at the crossroads of two interstate highways that provide access to the rest of New England and the New York metropolitan area. This geographic location is ideal for participation in inter-regional, interstate, and international commerce. Companies choosing to locate here often cite favorable costs relative to New York and Boston, excellent access to talent and market, and good physical infrastructure as reasons why New England's Knowledge Corridor is a good place to do business.
- Natural, Historic and Cultural Resources that Enhance Quality of Life.** The region's natural resources include beautiful rivers, landforms unique to New England, some of the most fertile soil in the world and a robust small farm economy, and abundant wildlife. The nationally-recognized Connecticut, Farmington and Westfield Rivers combine with smaller rivers, lakes, ponds and reservoirs to provide varied scenic vistas and opportunities for water-based recreation. Museums and historic sites can be found throughout the region, catering to the varied tastes of residents and visitors alike. Music, theater, and dance are readily available through established arts organizations in the region's cities and towns—and also through outdoor festivals held at venues throughout the Knowledge Corridor. Opportunities for outdoor recreation, from hiking to biking to skiing, are exceptional in our region.



While the Knowledge Corridor has a history of bi-state collaboration through the Hartford-Springfield Economic Partnership, many challenges still exist that must be addressed together. Now is the perfect time to forge new plans and partnerships, as strong existing ties will be further strengthened by over \$1.5 billion in new bus rapid transit, and commuter and high-speed rail investment in the region over the next ten years. This investment will better link the region to Washington, DC and New York City by 2016, with the longer-term rail vision extending linkages to Montreal and Boston. As our connections to other national and international markets improve, so will our potential for economic growth.

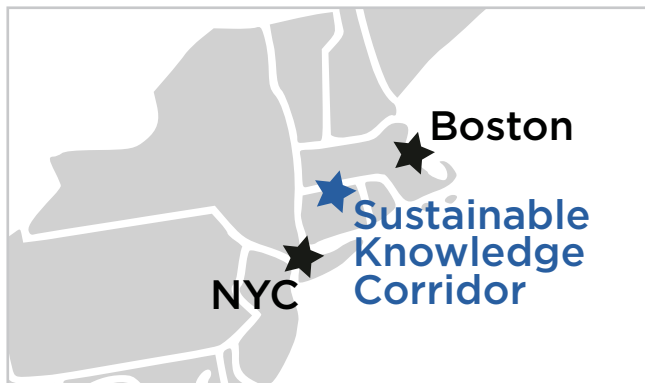
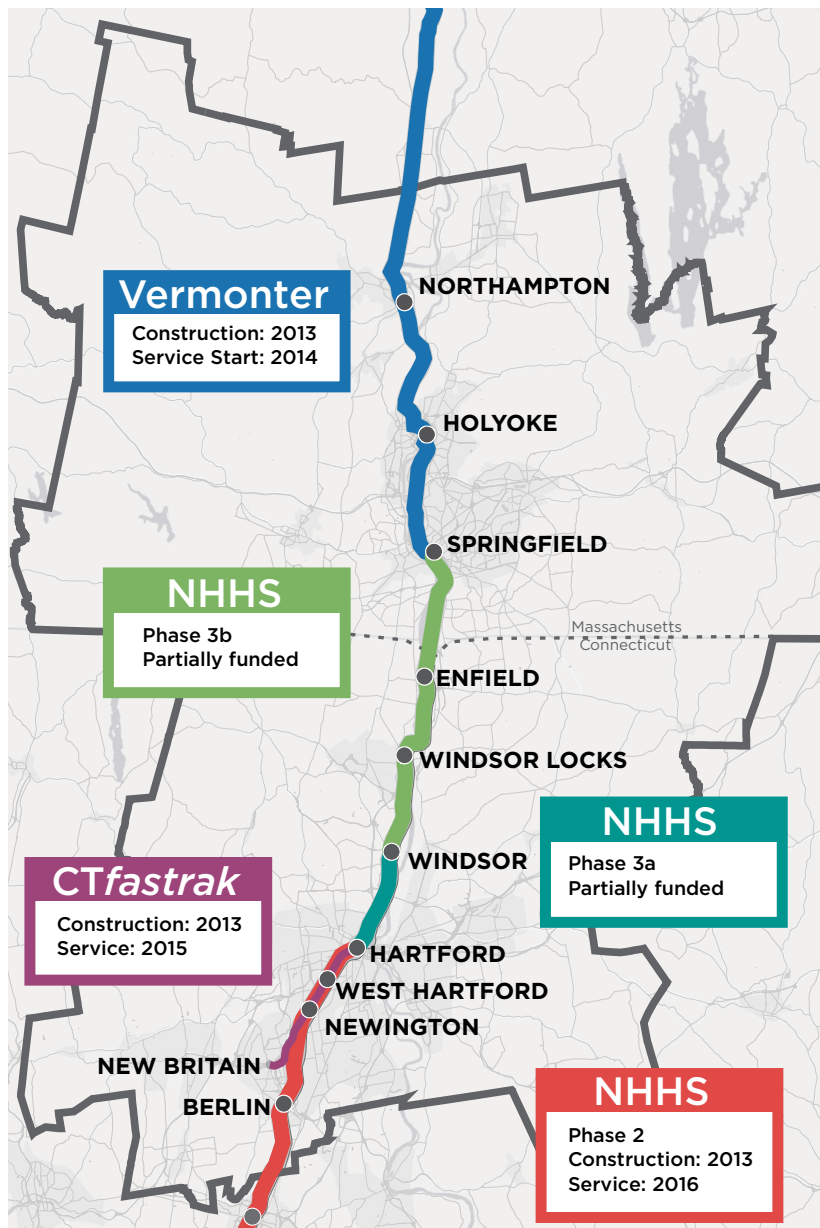


Figure 3. Status of Knowledge Corridor BRT and Rail Improvements.



Success in growing ridership on these systems will depend on the quality of the service, and changes in land use to create dense clusters of development that transit can serve. Communities with station stops along the rail and BRT lines are actively planning for transit-oriented development, and the regional planning agencies, states and other Consortium partners are committed to supporting and enabling it. Communities outside of these corridors are also planning for more compact, mixed-use development in town centers and other transit-supportive locations.



Photo credit: Chris Curtis

Purpose and Development of One Region, One Future



Photo credit: Chris Curtis

One Region, One Future lays out a bi-state strategy for preserving, creating and maintaining a sustainable, economically competitive, and equitable Knowledge Corridor Region. This action agenda was prepared by the **Sustainable Knowledge Corridor Consortium**—a partnership of 44 public and private agencies including regional planning organizations, municipalities, educational institutions, and other community partners. The Consortium was formed to oversee the bi-state planning project, which was funded by a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant. The geographic area covered by this plan includes the Hartford, Connecticut, New Britain, Connecticut and Springfield, Massachusetts metropolitan areas—the central portion of the New England Knowledge Corridor.

There are many different definitions of “sustainable” and “sustainable communities.” For the purpose of this project, we define sustainable communities as urban, suburban or rural communities that have more housing and transportation choices, provide for housing close to jobs, shops or schools, are more energy independent, and help protect clean air, water and land resources, thereby improving the quality of life in the region. These are the types of communities we are working to preserve and create as we carry out the activities of the Sustainable Knowledge Corridor Project.

One Region, One Future is drawn from the many regional plans, policies and studies prepared by the Sustainable Knowledge Corridor Consortium partners, and other agencies working to achieve a connected, competitive, vibrant and green region. A primary goal of this action agenda is to highlight, integrate and build upon the good work that is already underway, in order to create a springboard for continued, bi-state action. In addition, the HUD grant funded a series of special studies that increased understanding of key topics relevant to sustainability in the Knowledge Corridor. The Implementation Guide Appendix of the full report contains a partial listing of the plans and studies that provided the foundation for the regional vision and actions.

The Sustainable Knowledge Corridor Consortium held thirteen meetings over the last three years, which have supported the development of this action agenda. The Consortium meetings were supplemented by dozens of advisory committee meetings, convened by partner agencies, to develop the individual projects and plans on which this document is based.

Creating an Equitable Region

The need for greater social equity is a major theme that is woven into the proposed actions of this agenda. Today, the Knowledge Corridor remains a region geographically segregated by race, ethnicity and income. In addition, far too many people are unable to meet their basic needs: decent housing, a healthy diet, medical care and more. Predominantly poor neighborhoods and communities of color are homes to much more than their fair share of industrial land uses and environmental pollution. Further, underperforming schools, especially in major cities, mean that many of our children are not ready for knowledge-sector jobs. These inequities are the outcomes of long-entrenched racial and economic segregation that, while not unique, is among the most pervasive in the U.S.

This action agenda embraces the fact that access to resources is one important key to improving equity for all. The actions proposed in this agenda are, either directly or indirectly, geared to make it easier for people of all races and income levels to access education, housing, employment, healthy food, transportation and healthcare. Access is the key to creating a positive, transformative change in communities that so desperately need it today.

The Knowledge Corridor Consortium has prepared a companion document, a *Fair Housing and Equity Assessment (FHEA)*, which paints a full picture of regional equity and access to opportunity. The FHEA provides a framework for assessing the equity implications of future implementation actions.



Photo credit: Riverfront Recapture



Photo credit: Riverfront Recapture

Following is the *One Region, One Future* vision and action agenda that will help the Knowledge Corridor achieve a connected, competitive, vibrant and green future.

The Vision

CONNECTED

- Increased transportation and communication choices.
- Access to passenger rail and bus rapid transit services through the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield and Vermonter rail projects, and the CTfastrak bus rapid transit project.
- A network of bicycle and pedestrian paths, bike lanes, sidewalks, bike share programs, and related bike infrastructure.
- Complete streets that provide safe and convenient access for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as vehicles.
- Reduced dependency on auto trips and resulting savings in energy use and less air pollution.
- High speed internet access for all businesses, schools, residences and local governments throughout the region.

COMPETITIVE

- Improved job training and talent development programs to create a skilled workforce that is well-matched to the region's future employment opportunities.
- Increased educational attainment and job and economic opportunities for low income residents and people of color.
- More great neighborhoods in and around our urban core, with access to transit, walking and biking facilities, to attract and retain college graduates and other young workers.
- New transit-oriented development attracting a mix of housing types and employers, and supported by anchor institutions.

VIBRANT

- Communities and neighborhoods, which are places where people want to live, work and recreate, and places in which individuals and households thrive.
- More transportation choices.
- A broader range of equitable and affordable housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races and ethnicities.
- Improved economic competitiveness, for workers and businesses.
- Investment to support existing communities, to make them more livable, improve their quality of life, and protect their character and cherished landscapes.
- Increased opportunities for healthy exercise, including enjoying the outdoors, trails and parks.

GREEN

- Clean, fishable and swimmable waterways, resulting from reduced stormwater and combined sewer pollution.
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions, resulting from increased energy conservation and use of green energy production alternatives.
- Smarter growth and compact development patterns, resulting in the protection of natural resources, and reduced auto travel and air pollution.
- Increased land conservation efforts focused on protecting our farmlands, wildlife corridors and special natural places.
- Better access to healthy food, parks and recreation opportunities, particularly for urban residents.

The Action Agenda

KEY ACTIONS

		 A CONNECTED KNOWLEDGE CORRIDOR	 A COMPETITIVE KNOWLEDGE CORRIDOR	 A VIBRANT KNOWLEDGE CORRIDOR	 A GREEN KNOWLEDGE CORRIDOR
	Improve Rail Connections	•	•	•	•
	Create Integrated Bus Systems	•	•	•	•
	Adopt a Complete Streets Ethic	•		•	•
	Build a Linked Network of Bicycle and Pedestrian Routes and Amenities	•		•	•
	Assure Access to High Speed Internet for All Businesses, Schools, Residences, and Local Governments	•	•		•
	Match Talent Development to Jobs, Through Implementing a Bi-State Talent Development/Retention Strategy	•	•	•	•
	Aggressively Expand Development Near Transit or at Rapid Transit and Rail Stations	•	•	•	•
	Ramp-up Bradley International Airport (BDL) as Western New England's Airport of Choice	•	•		
	Zone to Promote Compact, Mixed-Use, Mixed-Income Village Centers and Downtowns	•		•	•
	Encourage Placemaking and the Programming of Public Spaces to Support Neighborhood Vitality		•	•	
	Adopt TOD Zoning Districts Around Commuter Rail and Transit Stations or Stops	•	•	•	•
	Zone to Expand Housing Choice and Support Economic Growth	•	•	•	•
	Support Strategic Collaborative Investments to Strengthen Neighborhoods		•	•	
	Revitalize Urban Centers by Attracting Jobs, Market Rate Housing, and Mixed-Use Development		•	•	•
	Develop, Adopt and Implement Complete Streets Plans and Policies	•	•	•	•
	Improve Access to Resources that Improve the Health of the Region's Residents, including Promoting Food Security for All and Reducing Hunger		•	•	•
	Institutionalize the Application of Green Infrastructure and Sustainable Design and Development Techniques	•	•	•	•
	Clean Up the Connecticut River and its Tributaries Through Cutting Pollution from Combined Sewer Overflows and Stormwater, and Promoting Green Streets and Developments		•	•	•
	Revitalize Urban Areas Through Remediating and Reusing Brownfields, Maximizing Access to Parks and Recreational Areas, and Maximizing Access to Local Food Sources		•	•	•
	Adopt Municipal Zoning Strategies and Other Policies That Will Reduce Our Impact on the Environment and Help Reduce Greenhouse Gases		•	•	•
	Cooperate in Promoting Clean Energy Strategies to Reduce Greenhouse Gases	•	•	•	•
	Adopt Coordinated Climate Adaptation Strategies		•	•	•
	Coordinate Regional Efforts for Land and Water Conservation, and Protection of Key Natural Resource Areas			•	•



TRACKING OUR PROGRESS

Three organizations will take the lead in monitoring progress on implementing the *One Region, One Future* strategies: the Capitol Region Council of Governments, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, and the New England's Knowledge Corridor Partnership (formerly the Hartford Springfield Economic Partnership). These organizations have made a commitment to evaluate progress annually starting in 2015, and to convene the Sustainable Knowledge Corridor Consortium partners at least twice a year to share accomplishments and discuss next steps to move priority strategies forward. In addition, individual Consortium partners are part of numerous existing partnerships, which are working on specific strategies and projects that are helping to implement this plan. The Consortium partners will continue working to move these strategies and projects forward in the coming years.

Effective action requires an understanding of our progress. What is working? What is not? One of the ways that progress will be measured is maintenance of the “How are We Doing” dashboard on the Sustainable Knowledge Corridor website. The Sustainable Knowledge Corridor has established a series of measurements to track general progress and evaluate success. These measures will help us refine our actions as we go forward. The sustainability indicators listed on this page are used to track how well the Knowledge Corridor Region is doing in achieving sustainability goals established through the HUD Sustainable Communities Initiative. Addressing sustainability through the lens of economic, environmental, and social goals, these indicators provide a snapshot of the success of the Knowledge Corridor from the broad regional level down to a town by town analysis. The indicators associated with each goal can be accessed in greater depth on our website under “How are We Doing.” Indicators will be fully updated on an annual basis and smaller updates will be made as data becomes available.

Sustainability Indicators

Connected

- Average Commute Time
- Transit Riders
- Vehicle Miles Traveled Per Capita
- Miles of Bike/Pedestrian Infrastructure Existing
- Population Affected by Food Deserts

Vibrant

- Total Number of Jobs
- Total Number of Business Establishments
- Land Protected
- Brownfield Sites Cleaned for Redevelopment
- Unemployment Rate
- Poverty Rate
- Foreclosure Rate
- Housing Cost Burden
- Concentrations of Poverty & Minority Segregation
- Neighborhood Diversity

Competitive

- Median Age of the Workforce
- Total Private Sector Payroll
- Average Weekly Wage Earned by Workers
- Average Household Income
- Workforce Training Completed
- Workforce Training Resulting in Jobs
- Educational Attainment
- Third Grade Reading Proficiency
- Early Education Enrollment
- Labor Force Participation Rate

Green

- Environmentally Friendly Commuters
- Land Protected
- Land Consumption
- Combined Sewer Overflows on Rivers
- Recycling Rate
- Healthy Air Quality Days
- Carbon Dioxide Emissions

CONCLUSION AND CALL TO ACTION

Thank you for your interest in *One Region, One Future*. Please remember:

1. **People Made This Action Agenda.** The ideas on these pages came from people speaking their minds at public meetings, devoting energy to working together, and drawing on their experiences to solve problems. It's not a perfect plan; there is no such thing. But we hope you will become excited and engaged about the actions in this plan that are meaningful to you, your community or organization—and pursue them.
2. **Share It!** This Action Agenda will succeed only if you talk about it with others: co-workers, neighbors, community groups, family. What information surprises you? What actions do you agree with? What should we do first? Above all—do not let this plan sit on a shelf!
3. **This Action Agenda is Strategic.** It focuses on the actions with the greatest potential benefits to our region—and how to make them happen in the next five to ten years. Because of this relatively short time frame with an action-oriented focus, *One Region, One Future* is different from other planning documents you may have seen. It's not a wish list. It's about *doing*.
4. **There is More Information if You Want It.** To keep this Action Agenda short and readable, we have condensed and summarized many other plans, which are listed in the Implementation Guide Appendix of the full report. More information is also available at www.SustainableKnowledgeCorridor.org.

Together—we can build a more connected, competitive, vibrant, and green Knowledge Corridor Region.



